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POEMS BY KATHARINE TYNAN



POEMS

BY

KATHARINE TYNAN



LONDON

LAWRENCE AND BULLEN, LTD.

21 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND, W.C.

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GENERAL
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MAIN

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GEORGE WYNDHAM, M.P.

CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND.

*ἐπεὶ ψάμμος ἀριθμὸν περιπέφευγεν,
καὶ κείνος ὅσα χάρματ' ἄλλοις ἔθηκεν
τίς ἂν φράσαι δύναιτο.*

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COUNTRY AIRS



THE TREE-LOVER

SWEET in the sweet May weather
Trees go airy and bright;
Winged with the gold-green feather,
Veiled in the deep-sea light.

Clad in the emerald silk,
All a-flutter, a-glitter;
Blossoms white as the milk,
Never were roses sweeter.

Leafy shadows, all dancing,
Lovely in shine and shower,
Ever twinkling and glancing,
Birds have built them a bower.

Lord of the leaf and tree,
When 'tis time for my going,
Leafing time let it be,
Neither snowing nor blowing!

After that journey taken
Let me open my eyes

THE TREE-LOVER

To woods by a May-wind shaken,
Full of the birds' replies !

Paradise woods in Spring,
Scarcely than Earth's were sweeter ;
Every leaf's on the wing,
All a-flutter, a-glitter.

Paradise woods in commotion,
Tossed in a heavenly May ;
After the bitter ocean,
Dear and homelike were they.

Lord of the world to be,
Build me no jasper palace,
But the young leaf on the tree,
And the young bloom on the trellis !

THE VIOLET FARM

IF I might choose my simple lot
Far from the town and quite forgot,
All in a sheltered nook and warm,
'Tis I would have a violet farm.

No daffodils should me entice,
Nor hyacinths with their breath of spice,
The tulip with her painted hood
For me should wither where she stood.

Instead of sheep upon the sward,
The modest violet I would herd.
Instead of golden heads arow,
Would see my violet harvest blow.

Under an arch of wild, wild cloud,
Below an opal mountain bowed,
All in a humid world and cool,
With winds and waters beautiful.

What airs across my farm should breathe !
'Tis sweet where pinks and roses wreath :
But pinks and roses are not sweet
Beside the hidden violet.

THE VIOLET FARM

No shortest day of all the year
Should fade without a violet's cheer,
Invisible sweetness hid within
And folded up in swathes of green.

Though white and purple babes be born
When Daffodil his flaming horn
O'er quiet hills and vales shall sound
And stir the sleepers underground ;

What country bliss can equal mine,
With violets for my flocks and kine,
With violets for my corn and store?
What could a mortal wish for more?

Under a mountain pansy-dark,
Loved of the eagle and the lark,
And set too low for fear or harm,
'Tis I would have a violet farm.

SWEET PEA

LIKE butterflies that hover
The reddest rose-tree over,
Or rosy bee,
The rosiest rose's lover.

Or like rose-leaves caught flying
In loveliest flight undying,
The sweet, sweet pea
Sets all the winds to sighing.

Scarlet and rose together,
She takes the brilliant weather
Like humming-bird
That flaunts a scarlet feather.

So strong, so fine, so airy,
Poised like a tiptoe fairy,
That careless word
Sets off, or foot unwary.

Ready for flight, yet never
Her links with earth to sever,
So lingers she,
One foot on earth for ever.

SWEET PEA

But in gold air and azure,
Yet treads her heavenly measure ;
 The winged sweet pea
Dances for her sweet pleasure.

THE CHOICE

WHEN skies are blue and days are bright
A kitchen-garden's my delight,
Set round with rows of decent box
And blowsy girls of hollyhocks.

Before the lark his Lauds hath done
And ere the cornrake's southward gone ;
Before the thrush good-night hath said
And the young Summer's put to bed.

The currant-bushes' spicy smell,
Homely and honest, likes me well.
The while on strawberries I feast,
And raspberries the sun hath kissed.

Beans all a-blowing by a row
Of hives that great with honey go,
With mignonette and heaths to yield
The plundering bee his honey-field.

Sweet herbs in plenty, blue borage
And the delicious mint and sage,
Rosemary, marjoram, and rue,
And thyme to scent the winter through.

THE CHOICE

Here are small apples growing round,
And apricots all golden-gowned,
And plums that presently will flush
And show their bush a Burning Bush.

Cherries in nets against the wall,
Where Master Thrush his madrigal
Sings, and makes oath a churl is he
Who grudges cherries for a fee.

Lavender, sweet-briar, orris. Here
Shall Beauty make her pomander,
Her sweet-balls for to lay in clothes
That wrap her as the leaves the rose.

Take roses red and lilies white,
A kitchen-garden's my delight ;
Its gillyflowers and phlox and cloves,
And its tall cote of irised doves.



THE HERMIT

WHO, counting human joys as vain,
Departeth from the ways of men,
And to the desert takes his road
Rejoicing for the love of God ;

Who dieth to the human hive
That he may save his soul alive,
Shakes from his feet the dust of sin,
And with much weeping is made clean ;

Him shall the desert sweetly please,
Sweeter than musk or ambergris ;
Unto his sands with song and sport
Companion angels shall resort.

The roseate clouds at dawn shall blow
Angels his way, and clouds of snow
Drift angels to the earth and make
Ladders of silver for his sake.

In his palm-tree shall angels stir
Skilled in the lute and dulcimer,
And with their golden wing-feathers
Shall fan him from the noontide airs.

THE HERMIT

And by his well shall angels lean
And see the golden heads within ;
Their hands the date and fig shall bring
To make his meal at evening.

Him shall no evil beast affright
Since angels guard him day and night ;
The vultures they have fled afar
From where God's feathered people are.

Sweet his estate who in the wild,
No more mere mortal man exiled,
Looks up, from his tear-watered sod,
And sees in heaven the smile of God.

SUMMER NIGHT

ALL in the leafy lanes
The glow-worm lights his lamp.
The nightingale complains
In scented dew and damp.

The nightingale her ache
Bares to the lonely night,
When there is none awake,
Nothing in vale or height.

The glow-worm lights his lamp
Under the blossomed may,
Hung in the dew and damp
His lamp lights up the way.

The nightingale complains
All night to field and grove ;
The glow-worm in the lanes
Hath lit a lamp to Love.

THE PASTORAL PILGRIM

FOR me the town sets forth in vain
Her painted pleasures in a train.
For I arise and go
To a delicious world I know.

There the gold-fretted fields are set
Like pearls within a carcanet
With daisies fine and fresh,
And kingcups tangled in a mesh.

The pastoral lands I seek where stray
The strawberry cattle and the gray,
Knee deep in dew and scent,
Placid, and breathing forth content.

Brave copses line each hill, and there
The pleasant habitations are
With roses to the eaves,
And nightingales amid the leaves.

When I shall wake there to the sun
And the birds' early antiphon,
And lusty bee his chant,
How shall I grieve, how shall I want?

THE PASTORAL PILGRIM

Sweet peas and dappled mignonette
Below my crystal window set,
Clear air and lucent skies,
And the dove's whispers and replies.

A garden and an orchard white
And pink—an orchard's my delight,
Whose very name doth bring
Airs of the summer, joy of spring.

And having these shall I repine
For houses, houses in a line,
With other men to dwell?
Give me my staff and cockle-shell.

ROSES

THE moon hid her face to-night,
 Veiled her in roses,
Rose-leaves in brilliant flight
 From the sun's closes.

Rose of a million leaves,
 How she is scattered !
Like to earth's rose that grieves,
 Dewless, unwatered.

Over the leaf-green sky
 Rose-leaves are drifting ;
Now the wind heaps them high,
 Now is a sifting.

There in the midmost flare
 Dian, capricious,
Draws the rose o'er her hair,
 Scented, delicious.

There from the rosiest heaps
 Dian discloses
Dimly her eyes and lips,
 Smiling through roses.

THE OLD LOVE

Out of my door I step into
The country, all her scent and dew,
Nor travel there by a hard road,
Dusty and far from my abode.

The country washes to my door
Green miles on miles in soft uproar,
The thunder of the woods, and then
The backwash of green surf again.

Beyond the feverfew and stocks,
The guelder-rose and hollyhocks ;
Outside my trellised porch a tree
Of lilac frames a sky for me.

A stretch of primrose and pale green
To hold the tender Hesper in ;
Hesper that by the moon makes pale
Her silver keel and silver sail.

The country silence wraps me quite,
Silence and song and pure delight ;
The country beckons all the day
Smiling, and but a step away.

THE OLD LOVE

This is that country seen across,
How many a league of love and loss,
Prayed for and longed for, and as far
As fountains in the desert are.

This is that country at my door,
Whose fragrant airs run on before,
And call me when the first birds stir
In the green wood to walk with her.

THE FOOTPATH WAY

THE winding road lies white and bare,
Heavy in dust that takes the glare,
The thirsty hedgerows and parched grass
Dream of a time when no road was.

Beyond, the fields are full in view ;
Heavy in herbage and in dew
The great-eyed kine browse thankfully ;
Come, take the footpath way with me !

This stile, where country lovers tryst,
Where many a man and maid have kissed,
Invites us sweetly, and the wood
Beckons us to her solitude.

Leave men and lumbering wains behind,
And dusty roads, all blank and blind ;
Come, tread on velvet and on silk,
Damasked with daisies, white as milk.

Those dryads of the wood, that some
Call the wild hyacinths, now are come,
And hold their revels in a night
Of emerald flecked with candle-light.

THE FOOTPATH WAY

The fountains of the meadows play,
This is the wild bee's holiday ;
When summer-snows have sweetly drest
The pasture like a wedding-guest,

By fields of beans that shall eclipse
The honey on the rose's lips,
With woodruff and the new hay's breath,
And wild thyme sweetest in her death.

Skirting the rich man's lawn and hall,
The footpath way is free to all ;
For us his pinks and roses blow :
Fling him thanksgiving ere we go !

By orchards yet in rosy veils,
By hidden nests of nightingales,
Through lonesome valleys where all day
The rabbit people scurry and play,

The footpath sets her tender lure.
This is the country for the poor ;
The high-road seeks the crowded sea ;
Come, take the footpath way with me !

POPPY

THE poppy flaunts a petticoat
Of airy films that fly and float ;
Of fairy gauzes, fairy-fine,
Lucent and crystalline.

Lighter than lightest gossamer,
Or the moth's wing at eve astir ;
Frills of the scarlet set arow,
And rosiest rose on snow.

No dancing Graces can reveal
Flounces like hers from knee to heel ;
No fairy twirl of fairy girl
Scatters such rose and pearl.

The fairies laundered this last night,
A glow-worm light for candle-light ;
This in the dews was washed and steeped
While drowsy mortals slept.

The little fairy fingers feat
Ironed it out so neat and sweet,
And set the frills with dainty skill,
Ruffled at the wind's will.

POPPY

The poppy wears her silk and lace,
Clear-starched, with such a delicate grace,
Her silken flounces hides and shows
As the wind goes and blows.

THE WIND IN THE TREES

SOUND of waters in the tree
All new-leafed and heavenly,
Waters going, waters flowing
To some far belovèd sea.

Every tree is vocal ; under
The clear bird-notes a soft thunder
Of the waters flowing, going
Some dim waterway of wonder.

Sound of waters hurrying past,
Rivers travelling, quiet, fast,
Many waters, flowing, growing,
Find the belovèd sea at last.

IN MAY

THRUSHES in twilight green
Sing from a leafy screen ;
The linnet and the lark,
Only in deepest dark,
Sleep the still hours away
Betwixt the day and day.

The blackbird calls and calls
Through quiet evenfalls,
Breaking the heart to know
Such songs must pass, must go,
Such beauty die, alas,
Beauty of things that pass !

Just for a day, an hour,
Such green in bush and bower.
Airy as things with wings
Mortal, immortal things,
Dearer because, alas,
Their hour runs in the glass !

Good-bye, ah, sweetest sweeting,
Pouring that heavenly greeting !
Music to-night, to-morrow
The world is old for sorrow.
Even as you sing you fly.
Beauty, good-night, good-bye.

THE CHILDREN



BABY'S SONG

THE very song the blackbird sung
When Love and all the world were young
My year-old baby sings,
Sweeter than anything with wings.

A little song, with catch and trill
Made of few notes and little skill,
A song for dancing feet
Of babes and birds and all things sweet.

The baby dances as he sings
Sweeter than anything with wings,
And sways his golden head—
To the first song the blackbird made.

THE CHILD'S CALL

HE calls with quick, insistent cry,
He calls at work or play,
And I must put my business by,
And all my books away.

He summons me from household cares
Back to his sunny room,
And up the stairs and up the stairs
In happy haste I come.

Sweeter than lark and mavis dear,
And nightingales in May,
The little voice so shrill and clear
That I must yet obey.

While up the stairs and to the door
My heart runs on in glee,
I hear a voice I knew of yore
That never calls for me.

Ever through shadow-time and sun
I hear a baby call,
That is not you, my precious one,
That is not you at all.

THE CHILD'S CALL

Afar, where heavenly waters flow
 'Mid Paradisal calms,
All on a sward where lilies blow
 The Shepherd counts his lambs.

Afar, beyond the wintry cold
 Upon the heavenly hill,
A little lamb a few weeks old
 Bleats for his mother still.

O mother's love and mother's joy !
 But while I come in haste,
I hear another lovely boy
 Cry from the lonely past.

And while I kiss your curls aside
 And hold you to my breast,
I kiss the little boy that died,
 That will not let me rest.

ROSA SPINOSA

SEVEN sad swords had Mary's heart,
Seven sad wounds to ache and smart ;
That young rose, her Baby, blowing,
Put forth thorns for her undoing :
Thorns to pierce the milky breast
Where He grew and took His rest.

O my rose of joy and grief,
Set with thorns in stem and leaf,
As her heart was piercèd thorough,
So my heart with love and sorrow.
Little rose of thorns, come close
To the heart you stab so, Rose !

THE SHADOW-CHILD

HE sees his own sweet shadow fall
At evening on the lamp-lit wall,
 With shrill delighted cries ;
And deems another boy it is,
With small, uncertain feet like his,
 That at his coming flies.

His own gold mop of hair so wild
Crowns with wild grace the shadow-child ;
 His quaint, broad shape behold !
His own dear bobbing gait he sees,
Like daisies dancing on the leas
 When all the world is gold.

His smock-frock to his feet is there,
As smock-frocks were your only wear.
 And when kind Nurse will throw
Live rabbits on the wall, not one
But two boys clap their hands for fun
 And dance to see the show.

Wasteful of sweets, he leans to kiss
This well-beloved playmate of his,
 But lo ! the boy is gone
Into the night, into the rain.
Yet see how fast he comes again,
 And see how fast is flown !



BLUE EYES

THE little boy we might not keep
Had such great eyes of heaven, such eyes :
Deeper than sapphires and more deep
Than any seas or skies.

Such eyes of wonder opened wide
On the strange world ; he drank his fill,
While other babies slept and cried,
Of wonder, wondering still.

“What is it that he sees?” we said,
And followed in the wonder’s track.
But when the little one was dead
That wondering gaze came back.

O are you wondering, wondering still?
For now you see such wondrous things,
Such angels by the field and rill,
With wondrous head and wings.

O are you wondering, wondering yet,
At the kind breast you lie upon,
And the kind eyes that once were wet
For a most holy Son?

BLUE EYES

Our little boy with wondering eyes,
I wonder will they wonder still,
Or meet our own with no surprise
When we come over the hill !

THE ONLY CHILD

LEST he miss other children, lo !
His angel is his playfellow.
A riotous angel two years old,
With wings of rose and curls of gold.

There on the nursery floor together
They play when it is rainy weather,
Building brick castles with much pain,
Only to knock them down again.

Two golden heads together look
An hour long o'er a picture-book,
Or, tired of being good and still,
They play at horses with good will.

And when the boy laughs you shall hear
Another laughter silver-clear,
Sweeter than music of the skies,
Or harps, or birds of Paradise.

Two golden heads one pillow press,
Two rosebuds shut for heaviness.
The wings of one are round the other
Lest chill befall his tender brother.

THE ONLY CHILD

All day, with forethought mild and grave,
The little angel's quick to save.
And still outruns with tender haste
The adventurous feet that go too fast.

From draughts, from fire, from cold and stings,
Wraps him within his gauzy wings ;
And knows his father's pride, and shares
His happy mother's tears and prayers.

TOBY'S HAIR

BROWN as salmon streams that hold
Wanton sunbeams in their snare,
Bronze, and powdered through with gold—
Toby's hair.

Swarms of dancing fireflies bright
Shed on bracken, everywhere,
Till the dark is starred with light—
Toby's hair.

Sparks upon a fire of peat
Make a delicate flight in air,
So with sudden life is lit
Toby's hair,

Silk and soft and fairy-spun,
Such gold-brown as pansies wear.
See, it gathers all the sun,
Toby's hair !

THE VANE

THE East Wind stays and stays,
Unkind to man and beast ;
I had not known in the old days
If it was West or East.

But Love has bid me learn
What winds be kind, be keen,
And how the glittering vane will turn
The chimney-pots between.

The East Wind blows and blows,
Too rough for a gold head,
Harsh for a little human rose,
All rosy-white and red.

Pack, East Wind, and be off,
Back to your arid plain,
And bid the West the children love
Turn round the gilded vane !

THE NEW NURSE

WHEN other children shut their eyes
The sick child coughs and weeps alone,
And Nanna, Nanna, Nanna, cries,
Because the nurse he loved is gone.
Between the coughing, with new hope
Watches the door she will not ope.

Between the coughing listens keen
For feet upon the nursery stair.
The nursery hearth is bright and clean,
The walls have pictures rich and rare.
Alas, the little luckless wight,
Whose world has gone to pieces quite !

Alack, the dear remembered head,
Black on its pillow through the year !
The terrible stranger wears instead
Light hair. O Nanna, Nanna dear,
Where do you hide through his alarms
Your comfortable breast and arms ?

Alone with her the long night through
And ill—could anything be worse ?
No goblin's grimmer in his view
Than this cold, patient, stranger nurse.
But though he calls for Nanna still,
No Nanna comes nor ever will.

HIS KNOWLEDGE

"No one will love you if you're naughty," said
His nurse, demure and chill.

The Three-years Wisdom shook his bird-bright head,
And answered, "Mother will."

He built a castle of his bricks the while,
Poised tower and bastion still ;

As one who suffers Folly with a smile,
He answered, "Mother will."

“ADVENIAT REGNUM TUUM”

Thy kingdom come ! Yea, bid it come.

But when Thy kingdom first began
On earth, Thy kingdom was a home,
A child, a woman, and a man.

The child was in the midst thereof,
O, blessed Jesus, holiest One !
The centre and the fount of love
Mary and Joseph's little Son.

Wherever on the earth shall be
A child, a woman, and a man,
Imaging that sweet trinity
Wherewith Thy kingdom first began,

Establish there Thy kingdom ! Yea,
And o'er that trinity of love
Send down, as in Thy appointed day,
The brooding spirit of Thy Dove !

SHADOW

His sunshine lies upon my path,
Its glory bathes me every place.
Who talked of trouble and of death
In this sweet world that knows his face?

His shadow lies upon my heart,
And where I go runs on before ;
Its ghostly presence never apart
Darkens my threshold, bars my floor.

Child, what have I done, to bear
Such weight of Love and its annoy?
For still the shadow shape of Fear
Outruns the hurrying feet of Joy.

THE NURSE

SUCH innocent companionship
Is hers, whether she wake or sleep,
'Tis scarcely strange her face should wear
The young child's grave and innocent air.

All the night long she hath by her
The quiet breathing, the soft stir,
Nor knows how in that tender place
The children's angels veil the face.

She wakes at dawn with bird and child
To earth new-washed and reconciled,
The hour of silence and of dew,
When God hath made His world anew.

She sleeps at eve, about the hour
Of bedtime for the bird and flower,
When daisies, evening primroses,
Know that the hour of closing is.

Her daylight thoughts are all on toys
And games for darling girls and boys,
Lest they should fret, lest they should weep,
Strayed from their heavenly fellowship.

THE NURSE

She is as pretty and as brown
As the wood's children far from town,
As bright-eyed, glancing, shy of men
As any squirrel, any wren.

Tender she is to beast and bird,
As in her breast some memory stirred
Of days when those were kin of hers
Who go in feathers and in furs.

A child, yet is the children's law,
And rules by love and rules by awe.
And, stern at times, is kind withal
As a girl-baby with her doll.

Outside the nursery door there lies
The world with all its griefs and sighs,
Its needs, its sins, its stains of sense:
Within is only innocence.

TALISMAN

ALL Heaven in my arm.
The child for a charm
'Gainst fear and 'gainst sorrow,
To-day and to-morrow.
The child for a charm
Betwixt me and harm.

O mouth, full of kisses !
Small body of blisses !
Your hand on my neck
And your cheek to my cheek.
What shall hurt me or harm
With all Heaven in my arm ?

MATERNITY

HER body, sweet to be his food,
Yields him his precious milk and good.
No body of death but life, see then
The sacred body of Motherhood !

Her heart, by one sweet guest renewed,
Hath room for all earth's hapless brood.
Yea, wounds for all earth's hurt children,
The broken heart of Motherhood !



MANY MOODS



APRIL

A BLACK North Wind that chills
New leaves and songs scarce sung ;
It was not so in Aprils
When I was young.

Thrush-notes and blackbird-trills
The blossomy boughs among ;
All in the leafy Aprils
When I was young.

Showers on the heavenly hills
Rainbow and silver hung ;
Such tears and smiles were April's
When I was young.

Small streams and babbling rills,
Green ways where gossamers swung ;
The young lambs leaped in Aprils
When I was young.

Daisies and daffodils,
Primroses newly sprung ;
Fragrant and fresh the Aprils
When I was young.

APRIL

Here in this town that kills,
The heart for cold is wrung.
It's O for the happy Aprils
When I was young !

MATER DEI

SHE looked to east, she looked to west,
Her eyes, unfathomable, mild,
That saw both worlds, came home to rest,—
Home to her own sweet child.
God's golden head was at her breast.

What need to look o'er land and sea?
What could the winged ships bring to her?
What gold or gems of price might be,
Ivory or miniver,
Since God Himself lay on her knee?

What could th' intense blue heaven keep
To draw her eyes and thoughts so high?
All heaven was where her Boy did leap,
Where her foot quietly
Went rocking the dear God asleep.

The angel folk fared up and down
A Jacob's Ladder hung between
Her quiet chamber and God's Town.
She saw unawed, serene ;
Since God Himself played by her gown.

SLOW SPRING

As the day lengthens, the year strengthens.

Strengthen, young year !

Grow strong and handsome, gallant and winsome,
Comely and dear.

Gray days shall hold you, sweet days shall fold you,

Till there shall come

The wind-flowers dancing, the tulips glancing,
The swallows home.

The nests not yet in the grass are set

For larks in the sky

To love you madly and hail you gladly,
Hail you and die.

The rose-tree shows not a trace of the rose

That shall crown your head.

The leaves are furled in a silent world
Till your word be said.

O year, grow slowly. Exquisite, holy,

The days go on

With almonds showing the pink stars blowing,
And birds in the dawn.

SLOW SPRING

Grow slowly, year, like a child that is dear,
Or a lamb that is mild,
By little steps, and by little skips,
Like a lamb or a child.

THE FAITHFUL LOVER

CHEER up now, my daughter, I have news for your pleasure :
A young man, a rich man, comes seeking my treasure.
Now say, shall I tell him that he may come wooing ?
You are young, little daughter, and the past past undoing,
The dead sleeping quiet.

O mother, little mother, do you think I'm forgetting
The long woe and fever, the fear and the fretting,
That the love of my heart still is tossing unburied,
At the will of the waves, by the winter winds hurried
Here and there through the riot ?

I am not forgetting, little daughter, your lover,
The brown head, the dear head the bitter waves cover ;
But his soul is in glory, nor jealous nor grieving.
Turn round, little daughter, and think on the living :
You shall ride in your carriage.

I would rather be his widow than a great chieftain's lady ;
And 'tis, O that in shadow our one grave stood ready !
With my head on his breast and my mouth for his kisses,
I would envy no fond, faithful lover his blisses,
No sweet bride her marriage.

THE FAITHFUL LOVER

He has acres and crops and a mansion and cattle,
And a proud name well honoured on old fields of battle ;
With his gold locks, his blue eyes, his smile true and tender,
'Tis to him many a young maid her love would surrender,
For sunshine or shadow.

Now sleep, my sweet sorrow, as a babe with its mother
On the breast that shall know not the child of another.
Go bid my young sister, with eyes gay and fearless,
To comfort this young man for a cold heart and cheerless,
The heart of a widow.

THE WEEPING BABE

SHE kneels by the cradle
Where Jesus doth lie ;
Singing, Lullaby, my Baby !
But why dost Thou cry ?

The babes of the village
Smile sweetly in sleep ;
And lullaby, my Baby,
That ever dost weep !

I've wrapped Thee in linen,
The gift of the Kings ;
And wool, soft and fleecy,
The kind Shepherd brings.

There's a dove on the trellis,
And wings in the door,
And the gold shoes of angels
Are bright on our floor.

Then lullaby, my Baby !
I've fed Thee with milk,
And wrapped Thee in kisses
As soft as the silk.

THE WEEPING BABE

And here are red roses,
And grapes from the vine,
And a lamb trotting softly,
Thy playfellow fine.

Now smile, little Jesus,
Whom naught can defile ;
All gifts will I give Thee
An thou wilt but smile.

But it's lullaby, my Baby !
And mournful am I,
Thou cherished little Jesus,
That still Thou wilt cry.

MOUNTAIN ROSE

COLD and rough the North Wind blows,
Black in the morning early.
Whom should I meet but Mountain Rose
Among the stubble barley?

All the world is under snows ;
Blowing 'tis and snowing.
Whom should I meet but Mountain Rose
The way that I was going?

Not a leaf on the poplar-tree,
Not a flower on the heather.
Mountain Rose looked shyly at me
As we stepped out together.

Mountain Rose, so airy and free,
Where are roses blowing?
Rose's cheek, half-turned from me,
The rose of love was showing.

Black and cold the North Wind blows,
Never a bird is singing.
There's a lilt in the voice of Rose
Sweet as the skylark ringing.

MOUNTAIN ROSE

Winter's black on heather and broom,
Where shall I find honey?
Rose's mouth is the honeycomb,
And Rose's laugh is sunny.

Black and cold the North Wind blows,
Winter comes in fairly.
I keep Summer with Mountain Rose
Among the stubble barley.

THE BIRDS' BARGAIN

"O SPARE my cherries in the net,"
Brother Benignus prayed ; "and I
Summer and winter, shine and wet,
Will pile the blackbirds' table high."

"O spare my youngling peas," he prayed,
"That for the Abbot's table be,
And every blackbird shall be fed ;
Yea, they shall have their fill," said he.

His prayer, his vow, the blackbirds heard,
And spared his shining garden-plot.
In abstinence went every bird,
All the old thieving ways forgot.

He kept his promise to his friends,
And daily set them finest fare
Of corn and meal and manchet-ends,
With marrowy bones for winter bare.

Brother Benignus died in grace :
The brethren keep his trust, and feed
The blackbirds in this pleasant place,
Purged, as dear heaven, from strife and greed.

THE BIRDS' BARGAIN

The blackbirds sing the whole year long,
Here where they keep their promise given,
And do the mellowing fruit no wrong.
Brother Benignus smiles in heaven.

MOTHER-COUNTRY

SHE is the mother-country, she,
 'Mid fields and hills and mists so gray,
That calls about her tender knee
 Her wandering children far away.

Her voice is like a lullaby.
 'Tis O, the mother's arms within
To close awhile the sleepy eye
 And feel the time of rest begin !

The sweetest heart, the softest breast,
 To win her children and to keep.
There where the dream of rest is best
 Rock us to sleep, rock us to sleep !

GREEN BUSHES

THE green bushes when first I loved you,
When we met and my heart approved you,
Tossed the gold and the scarlet high,
Gold and scarlet went drifting by.

Ochone, the wind and the weather !
Days when you and I were together ;
Much we heeded the leaf on the tree :
'Twas heart's spring-time to you and me.

The green bushes when we were married
White rose and the red rose carried,
When you drew me your threshold o'er,
Rose and white for our wedding floor.

Ochone, the days that are over !
I beloved, and you my lover,
Little we cared what the world might say,
You and I on our wedding day.

The green bushes grow thin and shiver,
You and I we are lovers ever ;
Cheek to cheek and heart to heart,
Still true lovers whom none can part.

Ochone, winter goes sighing,
Love in a world of care and dying ;

GREEN BUSHES

Ah, forget that I made you sad,
Yet remember I made you glad.

The green bushes grow gray and vernal,
Spring comes back and Love is eternal ;
In your arms come kiss, forgive me :
Had you ever the heart to grieve me,
Ochone?

IMMORTALITY

So I have sunk my roots in earth
Since that my pretty boys had birth ;
And fear no more the grave and gloom,
I, with the centuries to come.

As the tree blossoms so bloom I,
Flinging wild branches to the sky ;
Renew each year my leafy suit,
Strike with the years a deeper root.

Shelter a thousand birds to be,
A thousand herds give praise to me ;
And in my kind and grateful shade
How many a weary head be laid.

I clothe myself without a stain.
In me a child is born again,
A child that looks with innocent eyes
On a new world with glad surprise.

The old mistakes are all undone,
All the old sins are purged and gone.
Old wounds and scars have left no trace,
There are no lines in this young face.

IMMORTALITY

To hear the cuckoo the first time,
And 'mid new roses in the prime
To read the poets newly. This,
Year after year, shall be my bliss.

Of me shall Love be born anew,
I shall be loved and lover too ;
Years after this poor body has died
Shall be the bridegroom and the bride

Of me shall mothers spring to know
The mother's bliss, the mother's woe ;
And children's children yet to be
Shall learn their prayers about my knee.

And many million lights of home
Shall light for me the time to come.
Unto me much shall be forgiven,
I that make many souls for heaven.

ALICE

WITHOUT surcease of breath
Her soul hath slipped its sheath,
 And walks among us, beautiful, unafraid,
So mortal eyes may see
How immortality
 Transcends all beauty that must fail and fade.

Colours of air and flame,
The glory whence she came,
 Yet float about her in our dusty sphere.
Silence and rapture still
Brought from the heavenly hill,
 Whence she hath travelled to our exile drear.

Slight as a lance she is,
And tall as Lent lilies,
 Aspiring like a flame in windless air.
Incense and breath of spice,
Kept from her Paradise,
 Haunt her from slender feet to ebon hair.

Lingering and lovely voice—
Lutes, dulcimers, hautboys—
 Her voice remembers how the music went,
Still holds the rise and fall,
The sob ecstatical,
 Of some most heavenly-sweet wind instrument.

THE RETURN

WHEN we came back to the old beloved places,
Home of our dreams, we had forgotten quite
Days of our grief when new o'er little faces
Grass waved and dew fell in the starless night.

Leaves of green silk, laughing skies of azure,
Rose freshly blowing, and birds in the bowers :
So in that May the Spring spilled out her treasure,
Young Love went walking knee-deep in flowers.

Just for a space our hearts forgetting wholly
Wreckage of winter and blight in the groves ;
How Death came walking heavily and slowly
O'er the saddest garlands that once were Love's.

Mercy of mercies ! We were so glad returning,
Old griefs forgotten, old joys renewed ;
Death that was Life no longer wears the mourning,
Death that was Love hath raised his shadowy hood.



A PRAYER

Now wilt me take for Jesus' sake,
Nor cast me out at all ;
I shall not fear the foe awake,
Saved by Thy City wall ;
But in the night with no affright
Shall hear him steal without,
Who may not scale Thy wall of might,
Thy bastion, nor redoubt.

Full well I know that to the foe
Wilt yield me not for aye,
Unless mine own hand should undo
The gates that are my stay ;
My folly and pride should open wide
Thy doors and set me free
'Mid tigers striped and panthers pied
Far from Thy liberty.

Unless by debt myself I set
Outside Thy loving ken,
And yield myself by weight of debt
Unto my fellow-men.
Deal with my guilt Thou as Thou wilt,
And "hold" I shall not cry,
So I be Thine in storm and shine,
Thine only till I die.

PARENTHOOD

THESE are the years our God
Lays down, and nothing loth,
His sceptre and His rod
As He were tired of both.
Bids men and women take
His empire for a while,
To ban, to bless, to make
The children weep or smile.

All power be yours, He saith,
Over My little ones :
The power of life and death,
The power of clouds and suns.
The power of weal and harm
Be yours to have and hold :
In you they shall go warm,
In you be pinched with cold.

Just for these God-like years
Ye shall not know th' intense
Pang beyond prayers and tears
Of your love's impotence.
Be yours to make, to mar,
This lovely thing I wrought,
With love brought from afar,
And My eternal thought.

PARENTHOOD

This fashioned I of joy,
Much hope, without a stain,
Pure gold without alloy
Redeemed in mine own pain.
For this the wine-press trod,
Ensanguined to the knee.
Afterwards—saith our God—
Ye will account to Me.

For every needless tear,
For all the smiles unsmiled,
For lonely wrong and fear
Wrought on My little child,
Myself will exact the fee,
A God of wrath and scorn :
Better that day that ye
Were dead ere ye were born.

Contrariwise—His wrath
Our Lord God put away—
Your watchful love till death
I will repay, repay.
Lord of the skies and lands
Take pity on Thy dust,
Strengthen our mortal hands
Lest we betray Thy trust !

RECALL

As the blue swallow flies,
 Tracking the summer,
As the gray pigeon hies,
 Ever a homer.

So on her sunset path
 Goes my heart flying,
Fears not the storm-wind's wrath
 Nor the sea's sighing.

Wears like the sea-swallows
 Sea's tints upon her,
Goes as the carrier goes,
 Ringed by her owner.

Westward she flieth forth,
 And who shall bind her?
Looks not to south or north,
 East lies behind her.

Like a gold flash she gleams,
 Straight to the sunset ;
Hurls her o'er seas and streams
 With a wild onset.

RECALL

Straight to that tender heart,
By the dim water.
If they might never part,
Mother and daughter !

THE LEGEND OF ST. AUSTIN AND THE CHILD

ST. AUSTIN, going in thought
Along the sea-sands gray,
Into another world was caught,
And Carthage far away.

He saw the City of God
Hang in the saffron sky ;
And this was holy ground he trod,
Where mortals come not nigh.

He saw pale spires aglow,
Houses of heavenly sheen ;
All in a world of rose and snow,
A sea of gold and green.

There amid Paradise
The saint was rapt away
From unillumined sands and skies
And floor of muddy clay.

His soul took wings and flew,
Forgetting mortal stain,
Upon the track of that bright crew
That homed to heaven again.

ST. AUSTIN AND THE CHILD

Forgetting mortal dearth
It seized on heavenly things,
Till it was cast again to earth,
Because it had not wings.

Because the Three in One
He could not understand,
Baffled and beaten and undone,
He gazed o'er sea and land.

Then by a little pool
A lovely child he saw ;
A harmless thing and beautiful,
And yet so full of awe,

That with a curved sea-shell,
Held in his rosy hand,
Had scooped himself a little well
Within the yielding sand.

And to and fro went he,
Between it and the wave,
Bearing his shell filled with the sea,
To find a sandy grave.

“What is it that you do,
You lovely boy and bold ?”
“I empty out the ocean blue,
You man so wise and old !

THE LEGEND OF

"See you how in this cup
I bind the great sea's girth!"
"Ah no, the gray sands suck it up
Your cup is little worth.

"Now put your play aside,
And let the ocean be.
Tell me your name, O violet-eyed,
That empty out the sea!

"What lineage high and fine
Is yours, O kingly boy,
That sure art sprung of royal line,
A people's hope and joy."

"Austin, as you have said,
A crown my Sire doth wear,
My mother was a royal maid
And yet went cold and bare."

He shook his golden curls,
A scornful laugh laughed he.
"The night that I was born, the churls,
They would not shelter me.

"Only the ox and ass,
The night that I was born,
Made me a cradle of the grass
And watched by me till morn.

ST. AUSTIN AND THE CHILD

“The night that I was born
The ass and ox alone,
Betwixt the midnight and the morn,
Knelt down upon the stone.

“The bitter night I came,
Each star sang in its sphere.
Now riddle, riddle me my name,
My Austin tried and dear.”

Austin is on his face,
Before that vision bright.
“My Lord, what dost Thou in this place
With such a sinful wight?”

“I come not here in wrath,
But I come here in love,
My Austin, skilled in life and death,
Thy vanity to prove.

“Mortal, yet over-bold
To fly where th’ eagle flies,
As soon this cup the sea will hold
As thou My Mysteries.

“Patience a little yet,
And thou shalt be with Me,
And in thy soul’s small cup unmeet
Myself will pour the sea.”

ST. AUSTIN AND THE CHILD

When Austin raised his head
No child was there beside,
But in the cup the Child had made
There swelled the rising tide.

SHAMROCKS

A CHILD'S DAY

WHEN I was a little child

It was always golden weather.
My days stretched out so long
From rise to set of sun,
I sang and danced and smiled—
My light heart like a feather—
From morn to even-song ;
The child's days are done.

I used to wake with the birds—

The little birds wake early,
For the sunshine leaps and plays
On the mother's head and wing—
And the clouds were white as curds,
The apple-trees stood pearly :
I always think of the child's days
As one unending Spring.

I knew where all flowers grew.

I used to lie in the meadow
Ere reaping-time and mowing-time
And carting home the hay.
And O the skies were blue !
O drifting light and shadow !
It was another time and clime—
The little child's sweet day.

A CHILD'S DAY

And in the long day's waning
The skies grew rose and amber,
And palest green and gold,
With a moon's white flame :
And if came wind and raining,
Gray hours I don't remember ;
Nor how the warm year waxèd cold,
And deathly Autumn came.

Only of that young time
The bright things I remember ;
How orchard boughs were laden red,
And blackberries so brave
Came ere the frost and rime—
The dreary dark November,
With dripping black boughs overhead,
And dead leaves on a grave.

THE HEART OF A MOTHER

You were so far away,
 Beyond all help from me ;
And so when skies were gray,
 Or clouds lowered threateningly,
And the wailing storm-wind blew,
My heart went out to you.

I always felt afraid
 You were out in the stormy weather,
The rain on your bonny head,
 The wind and the rain together.
Ah me ! I never knew
What harm might come to you.

So many pains there are,
 And perils by land and sea ;
And each his cross must bear,
 And each his weird must dree ;
And it might be even then
You lived your hour of pain.

My fears were unavailing :
 You are so safe for aye—
My dear, who went a-sailing
 On Death's wide sea one day ;

THE HEART OF A MOTHER

You answer not my call
Across the gray sea-wall.

I follow, with wet eyes,
Your boat's white lonely track ;
But vex you not with sighs,
Nor long that you were back :
Your boat with sails of snow
Came safe to port, I know.

O is the new land fair
That you have journeyed to,
With floods of amber air,
And hills of marvellous hue,
And a city's shining spires
Fashioned of day-dawn's fires ?

O is it a pleasant country
That you are come unto,
With leaves on the greenwood tree,
And birds above in the blue,
And shades below the trees
Where the weary dream at ease,

And little children playing
On a green and golden mead,
And One o'er the greensward straying
Whose face I know indeed,—
The dead face on the rood,
The dear face, kind and good ?

THE HEART OF A MOTHER

O safe for evermore,
With never a weird to dree ;
Is any burden sore
When one's beloved goes free ?
Come pain, come woe to me,
My well-beloved goes free !

You are so far away,
And yet are come so near ;
On many a heavy day
I think of you, my dear,
Safe in your shelter there,
Christ's hand upon your hair.

SANCTUARY

“SANCTUARY ! Sanctuary !
Good Lord Jesus, ope to see
Two tired travellers at Thy gate,
Wan and worn and desolate,
Who all night have wanderèd
On Death’s weary waste,” she said.

“Sanctuary ! Sanctuary !
Fair Thy lighted casements be :
Streams the rose-light through Thy door
And the song rings evermore ;
But outside the night is black,
And a foe is on our track.

“Sanctuary ! Sanctuary !
I am weak, and weak is he ;
Icy dews are on his head—
On his hair’s young gold,” she said ;
“And our eyes are blind with tears,
And our hearts are cold with fears.

“Sanctuary ! Sanctuary !
Many a long mile travelled we—
I in life, and he in death,
Fared by many a lonely heath,

SANCTUARY

Seeking still this palace hall
Where Thou holdest festival.

“Sanctuary ! Sanctuary !
Stirs the tender heart in Thee ?
Lo ! two weary souls that stand,
Heart in heart, and hand in hand,
Where the shadow thickeneth—
One in life, and one in death !

“Sanctuary ! Sanctuary !”
Still unwearied pleaded she.
“Lo ! Thine own lamb, at Thy gate,
Whom didst early seek and late,
Whom didst ransom with Thy Blood ;—
Ope, Lord Jesus, dear and good !”

Sanctuary ! Sanctuary !
Was the Bridegroom fair to see,
Sitting at the table-head
Where His shining Supper spread ;
Fair the guests, all clad in white,
Each clear brow enaureoled bright.

Sanctuary ! Sanctuary !
And the gold cup lifted He,
With His lovely eyes ashine,
Broke the bread, and poured the wine.
Sudden through the banquet-hall
Rang the faint insistent call.

SANCTUARY

Sanctuary ! Sanctuary !
“ Lo ! is one that calleth me ! ”
Oh, the Bridegroom goeth fast
With a sudden tender haste,
Flings the gold door open wide—
Midnight, and the storm outside !

Sanctuary ! Sanctuary !
“ Thou hast tarried long,” saith He ;
And His own lamb gathereth,
Weak and drenched with dews of death.
One hath turned her round and gone
Back to earth—alone, alone.

ST. FRANCIS TO THE BIRDS

LITTLE sisters, the birds :

We must praise God, you and I—

You, with songs that fill the sky,

I, with halting words.

All things tell His praise,

Woods and waters thereof sing,

Summer, Winter, Autumn, Spring,

And the night and days.

Yea, and cold and heat,

And the sun and stars and moon,

Sea with her monotonous tune,

Rain and hail and sleet,

And the winds of heaven,

And the solemn hills of blue,

And the brown earth and the dew,

And the thunder even,

And the flowers' sweet breath.

All things make one glorious voice ;

Life with fleeting pains and joys,

And our brother, Death.

ST. FRANCIS TO THE BIRDS

Little flowers of air,
With your feathers soft and sleek,
And your bright brown eyes and meek,
He hath made you fair.

He hath taught to you
Skill to weave in tree and thatch
Nests where happy mothers hatch
Speckled eggs of blue.

And hath children given :
When the soft heads overbrim
The brown nests, then thank ye Him
In the clouds of heaven.

Also in your lives
Live His laws Who loveth you.
Husbands, be ye kind and true ;
Be home-keeping, wives—

Love not gossiping ;
Stay at home and keep the nest ;
Fly not here and there in quest
Of the newest thing.

Live as brethren live :
Love be in each heart and mouth ;
Be not envious, be not wroth,
Be not slow to give.

ST. FRANCIS TO THE BIRDS

When ye build the nest,
Quarrel not o'er straw or wool ;
He who hath been bountiful
To the neediest.

Be not puffed nor vain
Of your beauty or your worth,
Of your children or your birth,
Or the praise you gain.

Eat not greedily :
Sometimes for sweet mercy's sake,
Worm or insect spare to take ;
Let it crawl or fly.

See ye sing not near
To our church on holy day,
Lest the human-folk should stray
From their prayers to hear.

Now depart in peace :
In God's name I bless each one ;
May your days be long i' the sun
And your joys increase.

And remember me,
Your poor brother Francis, who
Loves you, and gives thanks to you
For this courtesy.

ST. FRANCIS TO THE BIRDS

Sometimes when ye sing,
Name my name, that He may take
Pity for the dear song's sake
On my shortcoming.

BALLADS AND LYRICS



THE CHILDREN OF LIR

OUT upon the sand-dunes thrive the coarse long grasses,
Heron standing knee-deep in the brackish pool,
Overhead the sunset fire and flame amasses,
And the moon to eastward rises pale and cool:
Rose and green around her, silver-gray and pearly,
Chequered with the black rooks flying home to bed ;
For, to wake at daybreak, birds must couch them early,
And the day's a long one since the dawn was red.

On the chilly lakelet, in that pleasant gloaming,
See the sad swans sailing : they shall have no rest :
Never a voice to greet them save the bittern's booming
Where the ghostly sallows sway against the West.
"Sister," saith the gray swan, "Sister, I am weary,"
Turning to the white swan wet, despairing eyes ;
"O" she saith, "my young one," "O" she saith, "my
dearie,"
Casts her wings about him with a storm of cries.

Woe for Lir's sweet children whom their vile stepmother
Glamoured with her witch-spells for a thousand years ;
Died their father raving, on his throne another,
Blind before the end came from the burning tears.

THE CHILDREN OF LIR

Long the swans have wandered over lake and river.

Gone is all the glory of the race of Lir,

Gone and long forgotten like a dream of fever :

But the swans remember the sweet days that were.

Hugh, the black and white swan with the beauteous feathers,

Fiachra, the black swan with the emerald breast,

Conn, the youngest, dearest, sheltered in all weathers,

Him his snow-white sister loves the tenderest.

These her mother gave her as she lay a-dying ;

To her faithful keeping ; faithful hath she been,

With her wings spread o'er them when the tempest's crying,

And her songs so hopeful when the sky's serene.

Other swans have nests made 'mid the reeds and rushes,

Lined with downy feathers where the cygnets sleep

Dreaming, if a bird dreams, till the daylight blushes,

Then they sail out swiftly on the current deep.

With the proud swan-father, tall, and strong, and stately,

And the mild swan-mother, grave with household cares,

All well-born and comely, all rejoicing greatly :

Full of honest pleasure is a life like theirs.

But alas ! for my swans, with the human nature,

Sick with human longings, starved for human ties,

With their hearts all human cramped to a bird's stature,

And the human weeping in the bird's soft eyes,

Never shall my swans build nests in some green river,

Never fly to Southward in the autumn gray,

Rear no tender children, love no mates for ever,

Robbed alike of bird's joys and of man's are they.

THE CHILDREN OF LIR

Babbles Conn the youngest, "Sister, I remember
At my father's palace how I went in silk,
Ate the juicy deer-flesh roasted from the ember,
Drank from golden goblets my child's draught of milk.
Once I rode a-hunting, laughed to see the hurly,
Shouted at the ball-play, on the lake did row;
You had for your beauty gauds that shone so rarely."
"Peace," saith Fionnuala, "that was long ago."

"Sister," saith Fiachra, "well do I remember
How the flaming torches lit the banquet-hall,
And the fire leapt skyward in the mid-December,
And among the rushes slept our staghounds tall.
By our father's right hand you sat shyly gazing,
Smiling half and sighing, with your eyes a-glow,
As the bards sang loudly all your beauty praising."
"Peace," saith Fionnuala, "that was long ago."

"Sister," then saith Hugh, "most do I remember
One I called my brother, one, earth's goodliest man,
Strong as forest oaks are where the wild vines clamber,
First at feast or hunting, in the battle's van.
Angus, you were handsome, wise and true, and tender,
Loved by every comrade, feared by every foe:
Low, low, lies your beauty, all forgot your splendour."
"Peace," saith Fionnuala, "that was long ago."

Dews are in the clear air, and the roselight paling,
Over sands and sedges shines the evening star,
And the moon's disc lonely high in heaven is sailing,
Silvered all the spear-heads of the rushes are,—

THE CHILDREN OF LIR

Housed warm are all things as the night grows colder
Water-fowl and sky-fowl dreamless in the nest ;
But the swans go drifting, drooping wing and shoulder
Cleaving the still water where the fishes rest.

SHEEP AND LAMBS

ALL in the April evening,
April airs were abroad ;
The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road.

The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road ;
All in the April evening
I thought on the Lamb of God.

The lambs were weary, and crying
With a weak, human cry.
I thought on the Lamb of God
Going meekly to die.

Up in the blue, blue mountains
Dewy pastures are sweet ;
Rest for the little bodies,
Rest for the little feet.

But for the Lamb of God,
Up on the hill-top green,
Only a Cross of shame
Two stark crosses between.

SHEEP AND LAMBS

All in the April evening,
April airs were abroad ;
I saw the sheep with their lambs,
And thought on the Lamb of God.

OF AN ANGEL

NEVER alone upon my way ;
Mine Angel 's with me every day :
And all night long he sits and sings,
Shaking the darkness off his wings.

The wavering moonlight steals and slips
From amber head to pinion tips,
Bathing him in a silver sea
That makes his eyes a mystery.

When I am bruised and sad and sore,
Have I not felt him leaning o'er,
Kissing the heavy lids to sleep ?
Yea, I have heard him weep and weep.

In the noon-sun I see him stand,
Rosy azaleas in his hand,
His sapphire gown, his aureoled curl,
His opal wings and mother-o'-pearl.

And while this Angel walks with me
I fear not all the ill I see,
Though in the fruit a canker grows,
And serpents harbour 'neath the rose.

OF AN ANGEL

In noon-day gold, in moonlight snow,
I know the precious things I know,
Hidden not from my love-keen sight
By dazzle of day and mirk of night.

Mine Angel's praying hands and meek,
The pure young outline of his cheek,
His grave young mouth, his brow like snow,
His everlasting eyes I know.

Love lights his taper at those eyes,
O, stainless Bird of Paradise !
Love in your heart to Love divine
Has built a temple and a shrine.

O lips that bless, and eyes that yearn,
And sometimes sad, but never stern,
Dearest, my friend, my gift of God,
Companion on my dangerous road,

Stay with me, though the day be long,
And Heaven is lonelier for your song ;
Though I be sad, and all my plea
Is only my sad poverty.

CUCKOO SONG

Cuckoo, cuckoo !
In April skies were blue,
As every hedgerow knew ;
And there was you.

In April

The cuckoo shows his bill,
With wind-flowers on vale and hill.

O, Love !

Sweet was April, sweet was April !

Cuckoo, cuckoo !
In May his song was true,
And the world was new
For me and you.

In May

He sings all day,
All the long night that's sweet with hay.

O, Love !

How good was May, how good was May !

Cuckoo, cuckoo !
Last June the roses grew
In many a place we knew,
I and you.

CUCKOO SONG

In June

He changes his tune.

A young man's fancy changes soon.

O, Love !

Fleet was June, fleet was June !

Cuckoo, cuckoo !

His notes are faint and few,

The lily is dying too,

For the rose there is rue.

In July

Away will he fly,

His notes blown back from an empty sky.

O, Love !

Sad was July, sad was July.

Cuckoo, cuckoo !

No more we listen to

The roving note we knew,

I and you.

In August

Go he must,

Love and lovers will turn to dust.

O, Love !

Cold is August, cold is August !

LUX IN TENEBRIS

At night what things will stalk abroad,
What veiled shapes, and eyes of dread !
With phantoms in a lonely road
And visions of the dead.

The kindly room when day is here,
At night takes ghostly terrors on ;
And every shadow hath its fear,
And every wind its moan.

Lord Jesus, Day-Star of the world,
Rise Thou, and bid this dark depart,
And all the east, a rose uncurled,
Grow golden at the heart !

Lord, in the watches of the night,
Keep Thou my soul ! a trembling thing
As any moth that in daylight
Will spread a rainbow wing.

KING'S PRISONERS

LOVE in his net hath taken us and bound us,
Hath pinioned hands and feet right fast within,
Our master's mesh of gold goes round and round us,
Cunningly wrought, and fairy fine and thin,
To hold us in.

O Love Divine, O larger Love, come take us,
Weave Thy sweet net outside our house of love ;
Prisoners of Love, O Love Divine, come make us,
Caught in thy snares, and seeking not to rove
Outside Thy Love.

SECOND SIGHT

"SISTER," said blind Dara,
 " What do you behold ? "
Round her and St. Brigid
 Flowed the dawn's gold.
" Sister," said blind Dara,
 " Would that I might see
Veils of gold and silver
 Drawn on hill and lea ! "

Over her and Brigid
 Carolled the lark,
Hills were heights of Heaven,
 Though their feet were dark.
Dew in the shadow
 Pearled the gossamer ;
Kine in the meadow
 ' Gan to low and stir.

Mists from the bogland
 Curled like silver smoke,
Young birds were singing
 In the spreading oak.
To the east and southward
 Scarlet grew the world,
And the sun leapt upward,
 As a ball is hurled.

SECOND SIGHT

Brigid, lost in praying,
Touched her sister's eyes ;
"O," she said, "my sister,
Dove of God, arise !
Eyes no longer sightless,
See His glory spread !"
Dara, with a loud cry,
Lifted up her head.

Saw the little rivers
Glide through bogland brown,
Where the yellow iris
Flaunted her gold gown.
Saw the sea of scarlet
Flush on hill and wood ;
Praised God's name, rejoicing
That his works were good.

"Yet," she said, "my sister,
Blind me once again,
Lest His presence in me
Groweth less plain.
Stars and dawn and sunset
Keep till Paradise,
Here His face sufficeth
For my sightless eyes."

"O !" she said, "my sister,
Night is beautiful,
Where His face is shining
Who was mocked as fool.

SECOND SIGHT

More than star and meteor,
More than moon or sun,
Is the thorn-crowned forehead
Of the Holy One."

"Haste," she said, "and plunge me
Once again in night,
Lest perchance I lose Him,
Gaining my sight."
Brigid, lost in praying,
Touched her eyes once more,
And the light went fading
Off sea and shore.

All His creatures praise Him,
From daylight to dun,
Stars and moon and cloudland,
And Messer the Sun ;
Seas and hills and forests,
And the frozen waste :
Dara in her blindness
Praiseth him best.

A NEW OLD SONG

THE Spring comes slowly up this way,
 Slowly, slowly !
A little nearer every day.

The blackbird 's trilling shrill and gay
His roundelay and virelay,
Good lack, as though the March were May !

In kirtle all of green and gray ;
 Slowly, slowly,
The Spring comes slowly up this way !

She hath delicious things to say,
But will not answer yea or nay,
Nor haste her secrets to display.

The Spring comes slowly up this way,
 Slowly, slowly !
To make the world high holiday.

The pink is on the orchard spray,
The lambs put off their fears and play,
Gone are the snows of yesterday.

'Twere well if Spring might always stay !
 Slowly, slowly,
The Spring comes slowly up this way.

TO ROSE IN HEAVEN

I

My Rose, 'twas the wild rose you were,
Trailing upon the hedge-top green ;
No narrow garden hemmed you in.
You had the dearest face, my dear,
Rose and white with a touch of brown,
Sweet as the country come to town.

The children found your goodness out,
The old folk and the poor and weak,
And the dog's instinct wise and quick.
To me, my Rose, in pain and doubt
What were you? Ah, well, none can take
The empty place that is heart-break.

The bravest eyes that ever were
You had ; the honest heart and mind,
The tolerant judgment large and kind.
Dear, in some day of pain and care,
How we shall miss your eyes and face !
And oh, your Heaven 's a far-off place.

TO ROSE IN HEAVEN

II

You need not fear again
The East Wind and the snows,
Nor dree your weird of pain,
Sickness and dying, Rose.
In God's land summer is,
And health and youth and bliss.

You need not go away,
When going was like death,
For leave to live your day,
For leave to draw your breath.
In God's land where you stray,
Sweet is the summer day.

You need not have for friend
House-mate and bed-fellow,
Pain that had never an end,
And sickness sad and slow ;
Or lie the long night through
While life ebbed out from you.

O *there* is no home-sickness,
Because it is our home ;
Nor labour nor distress,
Nor watching wearisome.
You need not fear the snows,
North Wind nor East Wind, Rose !

TO ROSE IN HEAVEN

III

I hope you will not wear in Heaven
A different face from that we knew,
Rose, like the rose that morn and even
Hath sun and dew !

Wear no new smiles, but smile as when
You were our own, to heal and bless,
Drawing from heavy hearts of men
Their heaviness.

Be just so kind, be just so brave,
There in your glory infinite !
No primrose growing on your grave
Is half so sweet

As you, my dear, were in the world.
You left your own place desolate.
The pale spring foliage is uncurled
And the birds mate

The pleasant days you loved of yore.
I think that where you are, my dear,
You love the things you loved before
When you were here.

Wear no new face, but keep the old,
Look from your glory and your grace,
From underneath the rays of gold
With the old face !

OF ST. FRANCIS AND THE ASS

OUR father, ere he went
Out with his brother, Death,
Smiling and well-content
As a bridegroom goeth,
Sweetly forgiveness prayed
From man or beast whom he
Had ever injurèd,
Or burdened needlessly.

“Verily,” then said he,
“I crave before I pass,
Forgiveness full and free
Of my little brother, the ass.
Many a time and oft,
When winds and ways were hot,
He hath borne me cool and soft,
And service grudged me not.

“And once did it betide
There was, unseen of me,
A gall upon his side
That suffered grievously.

OF ST. FRANCIS AND THE ASS

And once his manger was
Empty and bare, and brown.
(Praise God for sweet, dry grass
That Bethlehem folk shook down !)

“Consider, brethren,” said he,
“Our little brother ; how mild,
How patient, he will be,
Though men are fierce and wild.
His coat is gray and fine,
His eyes are kind with love ;
This little brother of mine
Is gentle as the dove.

“Consider how such an one
Beheld our Saviour born,
And carried him, full-grown,
Through Eastern streets one morn.
For this the Cross is laid
Upon him for a sign.
Greatly is honoured
This little brother of mine.”

And even while he spake,
Down in his stable stall
His little ass 'gan shake
And turned its face to the wall.
Down fell the heavy tear ;
Its gaze so mournful was,
Fra Leo, standing near,
Pitied the little ass.

OF ST. FRANCIS AND THE ASS

That night our father died,
All night the kine did low :
The ass went heavy-eyed,
With patient tears and slow.
The very birds on wings
Made mournful cries in the air.
Amen ! all living things
Our father's brethren were.

THE FAIRY BABE

A LULLABY

BETWEEN the night and the gray morning,
When lights are out and the crickets sing,
The fairies stole my bud and my blossom
And laid this wizened thing in my bosom.

Hush, O !

Sleep, little fairy, sleep,
Dream of the fields and the sheep,
But never a sorrowful dream may take you
Of the mother that could forsake you.

Hush, O !

My little boy was rosy and sweet,
I kissed him over from head to feet ;
But cold hands came in the midnight lonely
And drew him off, O my one child only.

Hush, O !

Sleep, little fairy, sleep,
Sleep while I wake and weep,
For it may be my little son misses
The mother's milk and the love and kisses.

Hush, O !

THE FAIRY BABE

The fairy woman, with magic skill,
Came full of charms to work you ill ;
I stood up in a sudden anger
And snatched you into my breast from danger.

Hush, O !

Sleep, little fairy, sleep,
All that I have to keep ;
For on your face that is pinched and weary
I saw a look of my own own dearie.

Hush, O !

My boy that went in the wild morning
Shall wear a crown and a gay gold ring,
Shall ride a splendid horse when he's older,
With cloak of velvet upon his shoulder.

Hush, O !

Sleep, little fairy, sleep,
Stars are beginning to peep,
And may your mother my wee son cherish
That so he go not milkless and perish.

Hush, O !

A DAY-DREAMER

SINCE coming from the land of dreams is lonely,
And the world's daylight very cold and gray,
I will return beyond the sun's rim only
Into the gold dusk of my yesterday,

I will return through yonder purple coppice,—
But O, thou love-worn nightingale, be still!—
Into a world of silken, scarlet poppies,
Wherein who loveth dreams shall have his fill.

ST. FRANCIS AND THE WOLF

THIS wolf for many a day
Had scourged and trodden down
The folk of Agobio town ;
Old was he, lean and gray.

Dragging a mildewed bone,
Down from his lair he came,
Saw in the sunset flame
Our father standing alone.

Dust on his threadbare gown,
Dust on his blessed feet,
Faint from long fast and heat,
His light of life died down.

This wolf laid bare his teeth,
And growling low there stood ;
His lips were black with blood,
His eyes were fires of death.

So for a spring crouched he ;
But the Saint raised his head—
“ Peace, Brother Wolf,” he said,
“ God made both thee and me.”

ST. FRANCIS AND THE WOLF

And with the Cross signed him :

The wolf fell back a-stare,
Sat on his haunches there,
Forbidding, black, and grim.

“Come nearer, in Christ’s name,”
Said Francis, and, so bid,
Like a small dog that’s chid,
The fierce beast fawning came,

Trotting against his side,
And licked the tender hand
That with soft touch and bland
Caressed his wicked hide.

“Brother,” the Saint said then,
“Who gave thee leave to kill ?
Thou hast slain of thine own will
Not only beasts but men.

“And God is wroth with thee :
If thou wilt not repent
His anger shall be sent
To smite thee terribly.

“See, all men hate thy name,
And with it mothers fright
The froward child by night :
Great are thy sin and shame.

ST. FRANCIS AND THE WOLF

“All true dogs thee pursue ;
Thou shouldst hang high in air,
Like a thief and murderer,
Hadst thou thy lawful due.

“Yet, seeing his hands have made
Even thee, thou wicked one,
I bring no malison,
But blessing bring instead.

“And I will purchase peace
Between this folk and thee,
So love for hate shall be,
And all thy sinning cease.

“Say, wilt thou have it so ?”
Thereat, far off, we saw
The beast lift up his paw
His tail a-wagging go.

Our father took the paw
Into his blessed hand,
Knelt down upon the sand
Facing the creature's jaw.

That was a sight to see :
Agobio's folk trooped out ;
They heard not all that rout,
Neither the beast nor he.

ST. FRANCIS AND THE WOLF

For he was praying yet,
And on his illumined face
A shamed and loving gaze
The terrible wolf had set.

When they came through the town,
His hand that beast did stroke,
He spake unto the folk
Flocking to touch his gown.

A sweet discourse was this :
He prayed them that they make
Peace, for the Lord Christ's sake,
With this poor wolf of His ;

And told them of their sins,
How each was deadlier far
Than wolves or lions are,
Or sharks with sword-like fins.

Afterwards some came near,
Took the beast's paw and shook,
And answered his sad look
With words of honest cheer.

Our father, ere he went,
Bade that each one should leave
Some food at morn and eve
For his poor penitent.

ST. FRANCIS AND THE WOLF

And so, three years or more,
The wolf came morn and even,
Yea, long forgiven and shriven,
Fed at each townsman's door ;

And grew more gray and old,
Withal so sad and mild,
Him feared no little child
Sitting in the sun's gold.

The women, soft of heart,
Trusted him and were kind ;
Men grew of equal mind ;
None longer stepped apart.

The very dogs, 'twas said,
Would greet him courteously,
And pass his portion by,
Though they went on unfed.

But when three years were gone
He came no more, but died.
In a cave on the hillside ;
You may count each whitening bone.

And then it came to pass
All gently of him spake,
For Francis his dear sake,
Whose Brother Wolf this was.

THE FAIRY FOSTER-MOTHER

Go not into the meadow, Ailie,
Under the June moon !
Fairies in the shadow, Ailie,
Croon a sad tune.
And their great King is sad, Ailie,
With his head into his hands,
For his delicate little lad, Ailie,
Far off in fairy lands.

He thinks on his dead wife, Ailie,
And heaves many a sigh.
She gave her babe her life, Ailie,
And never said good-bye.
And the little son like silk, Ailie,
Is dwindling every day
For mother's love and milk, Ailie,
Ailie, come away !

Run home, Ailie asthore,
To your own little one !
Your husband stands at the door,
And shades his eyes from the sun,
And calls you home from the cows.
Ailie, his pride and joy,
Star of the home and house,
To the fine husband and boy !

THE FAIRY FOSTER-MOTHER

Her smile was strange and still,
She held her eyelids down ;
She went by the ruined mill
By the ragweed yellow and brown,
Into the field forlorn,
With fairy rings on the ground.
In the gloom of the fairy thorn
Were fairies circling around.

She is gone on the fairies' horse
The ragweed, yellow and sly.
She will be a fairy's nurse
And wipe the tear from his eye ;
And her own wee troublesome lad
May pine, and she will not come :
Her husband be crazed and sad,
But she will never come home.

Never, never again, Ailie,
Though long we look for you,
Never in sun or rain, Ailie,
Never in dusk or dew.
With your night-black hair like silk, Ailie,
And your eyes like the sky,
And your skin as white as milk, Ailie,
Ailie Carroll, good-bye !

MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Not woman-faced and sweet, as look
The angels in the picture-book ;
But terrible in majesty,
More than an army passing by.

His hair floats not upon the wind
Like theirs, but curled and closely twined ;
Wrought with his aureole, so that none
Shall know the gold curls from the crown.

His wings he hath put away in steel,
He goes mail-clad from head to heel ;
Never moon-silver hath outshone
His breast-plate and his morion.

His brows are like a battlement,
Beautiful, brave, and innocent ;
His eyes with fires of battle burn—
On his strong mouth the smile is stern.

His horse, the horse of Heaven, goes forth,
Bearing him to the South and North,
Neighing far off, as one that sees
The battle over distances.

MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

His fiery sword is never at rest,
His foot is in the stirrup prest ;
Through all the world where wrong is done
Michael the Soldier rideth on.

Michael, Commander ! Angels are
That sound the trumpet, and that bear
The banners by the Throne, where is
The King one nameth on one's knees.

Angels there are of peace and prayers,
And them that go with wayfarers,
And them that watch the house of birth,
And them that bring the dead from earth.

And mine own Angel. Yet I see,
Heading God's army gloriously,
Michael Archangel, like a sun,
Splendid beyond comparison !

OF ST. FRANCIS: HIS WRATH

OUR father, 'spite his tenderness
For all the dear God made,
Certes, at times was not afraid
To ban as well as bless.

There was a young bird, ravening ;
A little lark this was ;
From a low nest in sunny grass
His parents rose to sing.

And in the nest as well as he
Four young birds soft and sweet,
Through dew, and dusk, and noontide heat
In love did well agree.

Thither our father often came,
Rejoicing to behold
God's little birds, with throats of gold,
Swelling to praise His name.

And here he often stayed and prayed,
Deriving much pleasure
From the dear anthem wild and pure
The larks sang overhead.

OF ST. FRANCIS: HIS WRATH

And oftentimes he raised his hand
 Blessing those little birds,
 Who piped in answer to his words,
As they could understand.

But this young lark of whom I tell,
 Content not with his share
 Of worms and flies and such-like fare,
Cruel, insatiable,

Upon his little brethren set,
 And with his beak them slew.
 It chanced our father came thereto
While yet the blood was wet ;

And saw the parents flying round,
 Their song all turned to moan ;
 The murderer, careless, cold as stone
Surveyed that slaughter-ground.

Our father's wrath and pity grew
 And kindled to a flame :
 " Ah, thou vile bird of woe and shame,
Ill fate will thee pursue !

" Miserably shalt thou die," he said,
 " Be drowned, for all thy wings ;
 And hated by all living things,
Even when thou art dead.

OF ST. FRANCIS: HIS WRATH

“The painted insect in the grass,
The frog that croaks anigh,
The firefly and the butterfly
Will hate thee as they pass.

“Even the cats and dogs,” he said,
“And carrion birds of air,
On thy vile carcass will not fare :
A curse be on thy head.”

And even so it came to pass,
Before three days were done,
That lark was drowned in a tank of stone,
The peacock’s looking-glass.

And there he lay in Heaven’s eye,
Dead, and dishonoured too,
Till someone passing by him threw
Upon a dunghill nigh.

Of all foul things in beast or bird,
Or in men’s hearts that be,
This, the foul fiend of cruelty,
Our father most abhorred.

THE BELOVED

BLOW gently over my garden
Wind of the Southern sea,
In the hour that my Love cometh
And calleth me !
My Love shall entreat me sweetly,
With voice like the wood-pigeon :
"I am here at the gate of my garden,
Here in the dawn."

Then I shall rise up swiftly
All in the rose and gray,
And open the gate to my Lover
At dawning of day.
He hath crowns of pain on His forehead,
And wounds in His hands and feet ;
But here 'mid the dews of my garden
His rest shall be sweet.

Then blow not out of your forests,
Wind of the icy North ;
But Wind of the South that is healing,
Rise and come forth !
And shed your musk and your honey,
And spill your odours of spice,
For Him who forsook for my garden
His Paradise !

THE DEAD SON

THE boy was in the clay ;
The mother was weeping still
From dawn to evening gray
When stars looked over the hill.
Between the dawn and dark,
The night and day between,
About the stillest hour of mirk
O, who is this comes in ?

He did not lift the latch,
He came without a sound,
He stood within a moonlit patch,
A space of holy ground.
His robe was to his feet,
All of the fair silk fine,
The gold curls were soft and sweet
That she was used to twine.

But on his hair of silk
There was a drift like rain,
His robe as white as milk
Did show a piteous stain.
“ O mother, mother ! ” he said,
“ Your tears have wet me through ;
I am come from the blessed dead
To try and comfort you.

THE DEAD SON

“The other children play;
But when I would rejoice,
O mother, I hear from far away
The crying of your voice!
Your tears are heavy as lead;
I cannot run, nor leap:
O mother, mother, mother,” he said,
“I pray you not to weep!”

The red cock and the black
Crew, and her lamb was gone;
She rose and set the window back
And welcomed in the dawn.
She swept the sanded floor,
And made the fire to burn,
With all her weeping done and o’er.
God comfort them that mourn!

THE DREAM OF MARY

FROM THE WELSH

“MARY, Mother, art thou asleep?”

“Nay, dear Son, but waking and dreaming.”

“Mary, Mother, why dost thou weep?”

“I saw Thy dear Blood flowing and streaming.”

“Mary, Mother, tell me thy dream.”

“Blessed Son, thou wert trapped and taken,
Scourged with stripes in a hall didst seem,
Mocked with laughter, despised, forsaken.”

“Blessed Mother, thy dream tell all.”

“Blessed Son, on a Cross wert lying,
While a black, blind knave from the hall
Pierced Thy heart that was warm from dying.”

“Mary, Mother, thy dream is true ;

True thy dreaming, sad Mother Mary.
Whether the years be many or few
Still the hunters gain on the quarry.”

Over the hill, and a cold, cold hill,
I saw Mary dreaming and weeping,
Making a space betwixt souls and ill,
Snatching men from hell and its keeping.

SIGN MANUAL

THIS is Thy lamb, yea, Lamb of God
 This, for whose sake Thy veins ran dry,
This, for whose sake by a hill-road
 Thou wentest forth to die.

This is Thy lamb, though torn, defiled
 By the beast's teeth. Where no stars gleam
All night, and never an angel smiled ;
 It went in an ill dream.

So is it torn and stained so deep,
 Thy lamb, Thy lamb, bruised and astray.
O the true Shepherd knoweth His sheep,
 Though hirelings turn away.

See then below the scarlet sin,
 Shaming its heat, Thine own mark, see !
Thy Name in blood that hath sunk in
 Dripping from Calvary Tree.

THE HIDING AWAY OF BLESSED ANGUS

IRELAND, A.D. 770

BECAUSE his fame was noised abroad
And blown about from sea to sea,
Angus, God's singer, dear to God,
Ate ashes in humility,
Deeming man's praise as nothing more
Than chaff upon a winnowing floor.

But since such dust might enter in
And choke the soul, he fled away
One morning when the birds begin,
About the time of gold and gray;
And came barefoot, with tattered gown,
To Tallaght, nigh to Dublin town.

At Tallaght the great Friary stood,
A hive of busy saintly bees.
Their Abbot, Melruan, wise and good,
Angus besought on bended knees,
Some task, however hard and rough,
Nor drive the starving beggar off.

His face was grimed with dust and sweat,
His lips were at the threshold stone ;

THE HIDING AWAY OF BLESSED ANGUS

His eyes with heavy tears were wet,
He beat his breast with many a moan :
Surely, my Lord the Abbot thought,
Some sinner in whom grace hath wrought.

He sent him out to tend the kiln,
To feed the mill and grind the corn.
Like a great clown of little skill
He bore large burdens, night and morn.
He cleaned the cattle's house and laid
The food before each grateful head.

Yet still he sang, lest God should miss
One voice that praised His Name for long
Perhaps, or for the singing-bliss.

He never sang so good a song
As that which brought the kine to hear,
And the shy hare and timid deer.

(The brother and friend of beast and bird.
Once, when an oak-bough fell on him
And crushed him, and his cries unheard,
He swooned, and life went low and dim,
The birds shrieked with such clamour and rout
They brought the human helpers out.)

O, but the fields stretched green and glad,
With stars of gold and stars of white,
No lovelier stars the heaven had,
The clear pellucid heaven at night :
The low hills tender as the dove
Girdled the bright fields round with love.

THE HIDING AWAY OF BLESSED ANGUS

The hills were blue, the hills were gray,
The hills were rosier than the morn ;
Thin veils of gold and silver lay
On emerald fields and fields of corn :
All purple on a sky of glass
A lovelier line there never was.

Down from the Vale of Thrushes came
That flight of carolling birds, which lit
Where Angus was, and named his name,
With a clear chorus after it :
And perching on his gown to sing,
They clad him like a feathered thing.

*Sweet, sweet ! the garrulous blackbird trilled,
Have you not heard, have you not heard
How Angus, more than mortal skilled,
And more than any singing bird,
Toils in the trenches like a churl ?
The Convent dunghill hath its pearl.*

He sang it at the Abbot's ear,
Who, by his casement in the light
Painted a missal fair and clear
With apple-blooms of rose and white.
"Seldom," he murmured, "have I heard
So noisy and so bold a bird."

At last the secret in this wise
Came to the light. A little lad,
A schoolboy with meek, innocent eyes,
Like those the patient oxen had,

THE HIDING AWAY OF BLESSED ANGUS

Long strove his difficult task to learn,
And failed ; and he was stung with scorn.

One morn, in very evil case,
Driven from school, he sought the byre,
And flung himself upon his face,
Sobbing with tearless eyes on fire,
Wishing that he were dead, alas !
Because his world so bitter was.

And while he sobbed, one drew aside
The straw, and came so stealthily,
The Convent churl, most pitiful-eyed
For a child's trouble sad to see ;
He knelt and whispered words of cheer
And hope and comfort in his ear ;

And smoothed with his fingers rough
The tangled curls ; and touching there,
He seemed to brush the trouble off,
The slowness that was hard to bear ;
He smoothed some tangle of the brain,
And made the difficult lesson plain.

The child climbed out of his kind arms,
And hied him to the school-house door.
And free from shame and all alarms
He said his lesson o'er and o'er.
Henceforth, his sluggish brains would be
As clear as crystal verily.

THE HIDING AWAY OF BLESSED ANGUS

And when his wonderful tale was told,
They knew, those foolish friars, at last,
Their Convent held the treasure of gold
Angus, whom for a twelvemonth past
Men sought, then deemed the search in vain,
Since God His gift had taken again.

In a procession they went out ;
The mitred Abbot at their head ;
And all the folk, with song and shout,
Went following down the way they led :
And through the haggard and the barn,
And past the yellowing field of corn.

They found the saint of songs and books
Feeding his dear kine with sweet grass,
Who turned on him their loving looks ;
And with his brother birds he was.
Seeing, he let the green swathes fall,
And turned his sad face to the wall.

The Abbot knelt and kissed his feet,
They brought him fine robes to put on,
And fair and costly things to eat,
A crozier like the sun that shone.
But Angus wept, and sore afeard,
Cast ashes on his hair and beard.

VOTIVE OFFERING

HEARTS of silver and of gold
Men had brought in days of old
To Thy shrine for offering,
Symbols of a holier thing.

Lord, Lord, dear, adored !
Take my little candle, Lord ;
Through the lights in Paradise
Let my candle please Thine eyes.

Hearts that ache and hearts that break,
Hearts to shatter and remake,
Here before Thy feet are laid,
Where June's roses burn and fade.

Lord, Lord, life is light,
Flame a heart that burns to white ;
As this flame mounts steadily,
Draw a heart that turns from Thee.

For a cold heart all its days,
Let my candle tell Thy praise ;
For a heart that's ignorant,
Let my candle one hour chant.

VOTIVE OFFERING

Poor my candle is and small ;
Yet Thou know'st the thoughts of all ;
How my candle saith my prayer
When my feet go elsewhere.

How one thought I leave behind,
Though my thoughts are hard to bind ;
Though I go away, forget,
Thou one hour o'erlookest it.

IN IONA

O 'TIS pleasant in Iona
Whether in shine or snow !
Grand it is in Iona
When the north winds blow.
The birds sing sweet in Iona,
O very sweet and low !
But sore I miss in Iona
A voice I used to know.

Iona hath the song-birds,
And the hum of the bees,
The distant bark of house-dogs,
And the wind in the trees.
She hath the singing cricket,
And the moan of the seas,
But never the low of cattle
My homesick heart to ease.

The wee black cow of Kerry
Is docile and kind ;
The big-framed cow of Leinster
Is much to my mind ;
The wild little cow of the mountains
Who shall loose or bind ?
Sweet is the call of the milkmaid
Borne upon the wind.

IN IONA

Columba, he has said it :

“Wherever a cow shall be,
There shall be found a woman,
Her wiles and witchery.
And in this Holy Island,
May God forbid that she
Should plague with sore temptation
My holy men and me.”

And since the kine are banished,
Heavy my heart doth go.
O sweet it is in Iona
Whatever wind will blow.
But I, the farmer brother,
My tears are sad and slow
For the low of the kindly cattle,
The voice I used to know.

CUCKOO SONGS

THE OAK SAID TO THE EAGLE

THE Oak said to the Eagle :
How old art thou ?
Clouds and the sunlight regal
Are on thy brow.

But the Eagle : Thine age, brother,
Tell it again.
We are old, both one and the other,
Past dreams of men.

And the Oak : Mine age hath thriven
A thousand years,
'Gainst the winds and the rains of heaven,
And lightning's spears.

I have seen men born and buried,
How long, how long ?
The race of the red deer harried,
That was so strong.

But the Eagle laughed out scornful :
Thou dost not know
Thou graybeard, ragged and mournful,
How youth doth go.

THE OAK SAID TO THE EAGLE

As an eagle cock I knew thee
An acorn smooth,
When the wind from the tree-top blew thee.
Look at my youth !

Thou that art groaning and hoary,
That time doth kill,
Look at me, clouds for my glory,
An eaglet still !

SINGING STARS

“WHAT sawest thou, Orion, thou hunter of the star-lands,
On that night star-sown and azure when thou cam’st in
splendour sweeping,
And amid thy starry brethren from the near lands and the
far lands
All the night above a stable on the earth thy watch wert
keeping?”

“O, I saw the stable surely, and the young Child and the
Mother,
And the placid beasts still gazing with their mild eyes full of
loving.
And I saw the trembling radiance of the Star, my lordliest
brother,
Light the earth and all the heavens as he kept his guard un-
moving.

“There were kings that came from Eastward with their ivory,
spice, and sendal,
With gold fillets in their dark hair, and gold-broidered robes
and stately ;
And the shepherds, gazing starward, over yonder hill did
wend all,
And the silly sheep went meekly, and the wise dog marvelled
greatly.

SINGING STARS

“O, we knew, we stars, the stable held our King, His glory
shaded,
That His baby hands were poising all the spheres and con-
stellations ;
Berenice shook her hair down, like a shower of star-dust
braided,
And Arcturus, pale as silver, bent his brows in adorations.

“The stars sang all together, sang their love-songs with the
angels,
With the Cherubim and Seraphim their shrilly trumpets
blended.
They have never sung together since that night of great
evangels,
And the young Child in the manger, and the time of bondage
ended.”

THE SAD MOTHER

O WHEN the half-light weaves
Wild shadows on the floor,
How ghostly come the withered leaves
Stealing about my door !

I sit and hold my breath,
Lone in the lonely house ;
Naught breaks the silence still as death,
Only a creeping mouse.

The patter of leaves, it may be,
But liker patter of feet,
The small feet of my own baby
That never felt the heat.

The small feet of my son,
Cold as the graveyard sod ;
My little, dumb, unchristened one
That may not win to God.

“Come in, dear babe,” I cry,
Opening the door so wide.
The leaves go stealing softly by ;
How dark it is outside !

THE SAD MOTHER

And though I kneel and pray
 Long on the threshold stone,
The little feet press on their way,
 And I am ever alone.

THE WOOD-DOVE

THE skies they were leaden, the snowflakes were falling ;
No blackbird or linnet was courting or calling :
But the wood-dove's soft moaning was heard in the distance,
And her song, all of love, came with dulcet persistence.

O what though the nests were all flooded with water,
And the cold eggs should give them no sweet son or daughter,
She was dreamy with pleasure for her true love beside her,
And the day shone as fair as though young leaves did hide
her.

O Love, moaned the wood-dove, the sweet voice of Summer,
'Twere death, it were madness, were my love a roamer.
But Love, true and faithful, what power has cold weather
To still our sweet songs, Love, since we are together ?

Then I to my true love, true love is enough, Love,
And how wise is the wood-dove who learns that lore off,
Love ;
'Tis our charm for the winter, when wintry winds cry, Love,
And when in the grave on your heart I shall lie, Love.

THE STORY OF BLESSED COLUMBA AND THE HORSE

COLUMBA was kept back
Four years from his reward,
The brethren's prayers, alack,
Prevailing with the Lord.
"O children, let me go!"
'Twas oft and oft he prayed,
Yet still with prayer aglow
They held him from the dead.

They held him back with might,
Kissing his habit's hem ;
His soul's wings set for flight
Were prisoned long by them.
His soul was sick for death ;
Yea, anguished long and dumb
To take the lonely path
Should lead the exile home.

At last one autumn day,
When woods were red and gold,
And the sea moaned alway
For summers dead and cold,

BLESSED COLUMBA AND THE HORSE

Columba, weary-foot,
Went out and saw the sheaves,
And flames of yellow fruit
Trembling among the leaves.

He saw the sheep and swine,
The oxen and the ass,
The drying swathes in line
Of honeyed aftergrass :
Opened the granary door,
And saw the brethren had
Of fruit and grain great store
To last through winter sad.

Upon a brother's arm
The great Columba leant ;
Bowed was that stately form,
The holy head down-bent.
Yet peace was in his eyes,
Happy and satisfied :
He blessed the granaries,
The beasts and pastures wide.

As slowly home they came,
There limped along the road
The old horse tired and lame,
That long had borne his load.
The horse that night and morn
Drew home the abbey milk,
Drew home the loads of corn,
And swathes of grass like silk.

BLESSED COLUMBA AND THE HORSE

With a low whinnying neigh,
He ran full wild and fast,
And hid his forehead gray
Against Columba's breast,
And wept against his neck ;
Till any heart of stone
Were very like to ache,
Hearing the creature moan.

" O little horse, so kind,"
The dear Columba said ;
" How hast thou well divined
I should so soon be dead ?
Thou wouldst not keep me, *thou*,
From glory and from grace,
And from Queen Mary's brow,
And from the Lord God's face !"

But while the horse sobbed on,
Columba stroked his mane.
O any heart of stone
Had ached to see that pain !
And still as home they went,
The horse came following yet ;
His head deject and bent,
His eyes still strained and wet.

The brethren they ran out.
Columba spoke them plain,
His tender arm about
His patient friend's gray mane.

BLESSED COLUMBA AND THE HORSE

“O kinder is the beast
That grieves, but lets me go,
Than ye who keep from rest
An old man, sad and slow !

“Far kinder is the horse :
He knows how pastures dim,
With many a water-course,
Beckon so sweet to him.
He too is tired and old,
And knows how sweetly call
The harps and hymns of gold
To me this evenfall.

“Long they have called to me,
My soul is hungerèd
The dear Lord God to see,
With glories round His head.
Sweet is the thought of rest,
While all the ages roll,
In that eternal Breast :
Yea, lovely to my soul !”

They cried then with one voice :
“We will not keep thee back ;
Go, elect soul, rejoice,
Upon thy homeward track.
And yet forget not there
Thy little ones who go
Like some sad wayfarer
When heaven lets out the snow !”

BLESSED COLUMBA AND THE HORSE

They led the horse away
Unto his manger brown.
Three days the sorrel-gray
Let the big tears fall down.
Three days the horse did mourn ;
The fourth day-dawn came faint :
Iona woke forlorn,
But Heaven received its saint.

THE CHRISTMAS BABE

ALL in the night when sleeping
I lay in slumber's chain,
The Christmas Babe came weeping
Outside my window-pane.
The Christmas Child whom faithless
Men turn from their hearthstone—
My dream was dumb and breathless,
The Christmas Babe made moan.

The small hands beat impatient
Upon my close-locked door.
The small hands they have fashioned
The world, the stars, and more.
He heard no sound of coming,
His cries broke wild and keen,
The Christmas Babe went roaming
For one to take Him in.

A burning bush of splendour
The Christmas Child doth take ;
Like some meek bird and tender
Caught in a golden brake.
I listen long to hear Him
Come crying at my door ;
Voices of night I fear them,
And He comes by no more.

AN ISLAND FISHERMAN

I GROAN as I put out
My nets on the say,
To hear the little girshas shout,
Dancin' among the spray.

Ochone, the childher pass
An' lave us to our grief;
The stranger took my little lass
At the fall o' the leaf.

Why would you go so fast
With him you never knew?
In all the throuble that is past
I never frowned on you.

The light of my old eyes,
The comfort o' my heart.
Waitin' for me your mother lies
In blessed Innishart.

Her lone grave I keep
From all the cold world wide;
But you in life an' death will sleep
The stranger beside.

AN ISLAND FISHERMAN

Ochone ! my thoughts are wild ;
 But little blame I say ;
An ould man hungerin' for his child,
 Fishin' the livelong day.

You will not run again
 Laughin' to see me land.
O what was pain an' throuble then,
 Holdin' your little hand ?

Or when your head let fall
 Its soft curls on my breast ?
Why do the childher grow at all
 To love the stranger best ?

THE WIDOWED HOUSE

WITHIN your house that's widowed Love's nest is bitter
cold,

Love goes with drooping pinions, his pulses slow and old ;
Your baby cries all night long for you he never knew ;
The dust is over all things, the grave dust over you.

Drear day and night go over and yet you never come ;
To all that lonely weeping so obdurate and dumb.
'Twere liker you to hasten, putting the glory by,
To kiss your love's cold forehead and still your baby's cry.

'Twere liker you'd come stealing, a little ghost in white,
To rock a tiny cradle all in the hushed moonlight,
To whisper to a sleeper till he should dream and wake,
And find the strange new comfort and lose the old heart-
break.

With you the years go over fleeter than words can say ;
And one shall lose her lover but the half length of a day ;
And one shall lose her baby but 'twixt a sleep and a sleep.
The dead are glad in Heaven, the living 'tis that weep.

BROTHER RONAIN OF THE BIRDS

OVER the sea-mists and the foam,
The birds had built their island steady,
With many a trove of leaf and loam,
And sprays of coral, ripe and ruddy

They built it strong, they built it fair,
Moored to the rocks and time-deriding ;
Thither flocked citizens of air
To make a city on land abiding.

And some there settled for life because
Of sea and tempest they were weary.
The owl-folk made the equal laws
For sparrow and eagle in his eyrie.

And there tom-tit and goshawk went
In equal yoke, like brothers loving ;
The vulture to the robin leant
With his old tales of war and roving.

Never was such a simple land,
With such a happy buzz of building,
And twigs and moss for lime and sand,
And beaks for tools the masons wielding.

BROTHER RONAIN OF THE BIRDS

And each sang blithely at his task,
From nightingale to husky starling,
At the dear house wherein should bask
That pearl of price, his bright-eyed darling.

So all went gaily till each nest
Was built and ready for occupation ;
And one Spring morn all sang their best
At morning-song, as was their fashion,

Praising the Lord of sea and sky
Who kept them all the night from peril,
And gave them love and wings to fly,
And worms and grubs when earth was sterile.

When one who was a chief of birds
Said : " Brothers, is it meet we marry
And die like any Pagan hordes,
With never a priest to bless or bury ? "

" It is not meet ! " the birds replied :
" And would some priest of God came fleetly
Over the sunset and the tide,
And here would bide to bless us sweetly ! "

Then spake a blackbird from the west :
" In Erin dear that 's over the water,
There is a cleric loves birds best,
Father and mother, son and daughter.

BROTHER RONAIN OF THE BIRDS

“When by the sands he walks at morn
The flight of birds his meek head covers,
His pocket full of crumbs and corn
He carries for his feathered lovers.

“How many a morn have I that speak
Picked juicy tit-bits from his fingers ;
And fed, his thanksgiving so meek
To join the wildest blackbird lingers.

“He knows the bird-tongue, every word,
Knows well our notes of joy and grieving ;
And Ronain singing to the Lord
Would melt the hardest bird-heart living.”

Thereat they counsel took, and made
A raft for human weight and feathered,
And sailed the wild seas undismayed,
Till by St. Mel's the raft was tethered.

And Ronain, reading in his book,
Was 'ware a cloud fell o'er the letter,
And heard the myriad wings that shook
And sweet “tweet-tweet” of birdly chatter.

Then all the birds swept down on him,
Fluttering in a wild commotion,
And prayed him for their island dim,
Far away in the middle ocean.

BROTHER RONAIN OF THE BIRDS

What dream fell over Ronain then?
Or did God's guiding whisper rather
Bid him go out from haunts of men,
Apostle to the folk of feather?

Who knows? The last saw Ronain's face
Was Brother Aiden, who beheld him
Down by the rocks, a lonely place
Where the good brothers walked but seldom.

And Aiden said a cloud of birds
Was circling round his head and habit,
Singing so sweet. "Perchance the Lord's
Good will hath rapt him," said the Abbot.

They searched for him among the rocks,
Parted the seaweed o'er the shallows,
And dived in water depths where flocks
Of cormorants fished the ocean fallows.

But never a relic came to light
Of him, so they at last desisted,
And prayed that his dear soul so white
With Christ the Lord supped joy and rested.

And Ronain, he was with his flock.
They built his house of shell and wattle
Against the brown lee of a rock,
That sheltered him from the wind's battle.

BROTHER RONAIN OF THE BIRDS

There he abode : but *when* he died—

I know not. You shall ask some other
Who hath more learning to decide ;
And if the birds found a new brother

To be their priest. It well may be.

Ronain still lives, young and unfailing,
In that sweet island over the sea
Whence never a mariner comes sailing.

THE ONLY DAUGHTER

O NEW love that i'm going to,
And wonderful and bold love !
Yet not more tender, not more true,
More faithful than the old love.
The dear love, the old love,
The love as good as gold, Love,
Ochone, the love I leave for you !
My father's hand is cold, Love.

They say a mother's love is best :
My mother died long syne, Love,
My father's heart hath made my rest,
And heavy fret is mine, Love,
That I, Love, must leave, Love,
That constant heart to grieve, Love.
Och wirrasthru, Love's empty nest
Where spiders spin and weave, Love !

Long will my father stand and gaze
His lonely pastures o'er, Love,
Ere I come gaily up the ways,
As many a time before, Love.
His head, Love, is low, Love,
And he is old, you know, Love.
Mavrone, the love of happy days !
But where you go I go, Love.

ASPIRATION

THE rarest of honeysuckle is on the hedge-top high ;
The reddest of rose-red apples swings on the good tree's
crest ;

The gladdest of songs and singers are lost in the heart of the
sky.

Hark to the lark, and his anthem, soaring away from the
nest.

Go higher and higher and higher, the highest is ever the
best !

Green are the fields of the earth, holy and sweet her joys ;
Take and taste, and be glad—as fruit and blossom and bird,
But still as an exile, Soul : then hey ! with a singing voice,
For the stars and sun and sweet heaven, whose ultimate
height is the Lord !

Ripe, lovely and glad you shall grow, in the light of His face
and His word.

SKY-ROSES

ROSES in the sky,
Roses in the sea ;
Bowers of scarlet sky-roses,
Take my heart and me.

God was good to make,
This December weather,
All His sky a rose-garden,
Rose and fire together.

To the East are burning
Roses in a garden,
Roses in a rosy field,
Hesper for their warden.

Yonder to the West
Roses all a-fire,
Mirror now some rare splendid
Rose of their desire.

Pulsing deeper, deeper,
Waves of fire throb on.
Never were such roses
At sunset or dawn.

SKY-ROSES

Roses on the hills,
Roses in the hollow,
Roses on the wet hedges,
In the shining fallow.

West Wind, blow and blow !
That has blown ajar
Gates of God's great rose-garden
Where His angels are,

Gathering up the rose-leaves
For a shower of roses
On the night the Lord Babe
His sweet eye uncloses.

All the sky is scarlet,
Flaming on the azure.
O, there's fire in heaven !
Roses for a treasure.

Leagues of rose and scarlet,
Roses red as blood:
All the world's a rose-garden.
God is good, is good.

A GARDENER-SAGE

HERE in the garden-bed,
Hoeing the celery,
Wonders the Lord has made
Pass ever before me.
I saw the young birds build,
And swallows come and go,
And summer grow and gild,
And winter die in snow.

Many a thing I note,
And store it in my mind,
For all my ragged coat
That scarce will stop the wind.
I light my pipe and draw,
And, leaning on my spade,
I marvel with much awe
O'er all the Lord hath made.

Now, here's a curious thing :
Upon the first of March
The crow goes house-building
In the elm and in the larch.
And be it shine or snow,
Though many winds carouse,

A GARDENER-SAGE

That day the artful crow
Begins to build his house.

But then—the wonder's big!—

*If Sunday fell that day,
Nor straw, nor scraw, nor twig,
Till Monday would he lay.*

His black wings to his side,
He'd drone upon his perch,
Subdued and holy-eyed
As though he were at church.

The crow's a gentleman
Not greatly to my mind,
He'll steal what seeds he can,
And all you hide he'll find.
Yet though he's bully and sneak,
To small birds bird of prey,
He counts the days of the week,
And keeps the Sabbath Day.

GOD'S BIRD

NAY, not Thine eagle, Lord ;
No golden eagle I,
That creep half-fainting on the sward
And have not wings to fly.

Nor yet Thy swallow dear,
That, faring home to Thee,
Looks on the storm and hath no fear
And broods above the sea.

Nor yet Thy tender dove,
Meek as Thyself, Thou Lamb !
I would I were the dove, Thy love,
And not the thing I am !

But take me in Thy hand
To be Thy sparrow, then ;
Were two sparrows in Holy Land,
One farthing bought the twain.

Make me Thy sparrow, then,
That trembles in Thy hold ;
And who shall pluck me out again
And cast me in the cold ?

GOD'S BIRD

But if I fall at last,
 A thing of little price,
If Thou one thought on me hast cast,
 Lo, then my Paradise !

LAMENT

You were like a light
In your place ;
Fires of love burned bright
In your face,
Full of grace.
You were like a light in your place.

Like a light put out,
You are flown ;
Night is dark about,
Ullagone !
Cold as stone.
Like a light put out you are flown.

MIRACLE PLAYS

THE NATIVITY

SCENE I.—*Shepherds on a hillside, watching their flocks by night.*

FIRST SHEPHERD.

THE frost is crackling in the grass ;
'Twere well the flock warm-housed was.
How merrily now the time would pass
Were I by mine own fire.

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Ay, neighbour, sad the shepherd's lot.
Whether the wind be cold or not,
He must away from wife and cot,
To frozen field and byre.

FIRST SHEPHERD.

Where's Jacob ?

SECOND SHEPHERD.

See ! he cometh now
Yonder, over the wheatfield brow ;
And in his arms he hath, I trow,
A young lamb, newly born.

THE NATIVITY

Let's heap the fire ; the wind brings snow ;
And feed the little life that's low ;
Lamb's life and babe's life flickering go
In this gray hour ere morn.

THIRD SHEPHERD (*entering, a lamb in his arms*).

Brothers, a little lamb I bring,
A curled and soft and helpless thing ;
Its mother died at birth-giving ;
And see the blood upon

The fleece, as though one marked it thus
For sacrifice most piteous.
There's room enough for this with us,
Beside my little son.

FIRST SHEPHERD.

Brothers, the night grows still and fair.
What balmy warmth is in the air ?
Look ye, whence comes that splendid Star,
Travelling to Bethlehem ?

THIRD SHEPHERD.

To-night some marvels we shall see.
Golden-clad folk went down by me,
All shimmering from the head to knee,
And with a diadem.

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Peace now ! For see above our hill
The heavens are opening wide, until

THE NATIVITY

The golden glory bids us kneel
And praise God in the night.

See, rows on rows of shining ones,
All chanting, in their silver tones,
Matins and Lauds and orisons,
In one long golden flight !

THE ANGELS (*singing*).

*Gloria in Excelsis Deo,
Et in terra pax hominibus
Bonae voluntatis !*

FIRST SHEPHERD.

Lo, they are hushed ! but flutes begin
A silver music, soft and thin.
In one long trail the stars move in
And lean above the town.

'Tis the stars singing that we hear,
Like silver trumpets ringing clear.
How purely floats each silver sphere !
We too will travel down.

ALL.

Come up, come up, black fleece and white,
Wether and ewe, and lamb so light,
And you, the wean was born to-night,
Come, follow the Star's track !

THE NATIVITY

It beckons us the way it goes ;
And Tib, our dog, the creature knows :
He too, in bitter frosts and snows,
Saw Gates of Heaven rolled back.

[They gather up their belongings, and all go out.]

SCENE II.—*The stable. MARY sitteth in the grass of the manger, the BABE on her knee. JOSEPH kneeleth by her. The Ox and the Ass mildly gaze upon her SON.*

MARY.

Sweet Son, and is it thus you come
To such a poor, unworthy home ?
Better than this was Mary's womb,
Unworthy though it were.

Nine months have I desired you, sweet,
To kiss your prisoned hands and feet ;
But never dreamt your face to greet
In a sad stable, bare.

Sleep, little one, sleep sweet, mine own !
Mother shall rock her dearest one.
To-night He is her own, her Son,
Whatever the years bring,

In Nazareth she hath laid by
Great store of baby napery,
With lavender sweet, and rosemary,
All for her Baby King.

THE NATIVITY

JOSEPH.

Mary, give me His feet to kiss.
Alack, that in such place as this
The Child is born, Whom on my knees
Most humbly I adore.

Thou knowest how through this cold-heart town,
Weary I travelled up and down,
Praying a shelter for mine own,
All in her need so sore.

There was no woman, sweet, to come
And take thy hand, and lead thee home,
And find the hours not wearisome,
To watch by thee till morn ;

And with a woman's art to soothe
The Holy Babe, and wash and clothe.
Great glory they have lost, in truth,
By their cold hearts of scorn.

MARY.

Come hither, little ox and ass,
That gave my Son your scented grass ;
His hands shall o'er your foreheads pass
In love and thanksgiving.

What would we do, both He and I,
Had ye the world's cold cruelty,
Shelter and cradle to deny
To this most Holy Thing?

[*The Ass and the Ox kneel down.*

THE NATIVITY

Now bless them, little Baby Son,
Thy wrath for their oppression ;
Thy blessing where there 's kindness done
 To these who gave Thee bed.

Yea, blessed these so wistful-eyed
That watched thy bed of birth beside,
And heard Thee when Thy dear voice cried,
 And saw Thee clothed and fed.

O little ass and ox, in truth
Great glory shall accrue to both,
For when the cold world lay in sloth
 Ye kept the watch with joy ;

And by your breath the frosts were thawed,
Your kind brown eyes saw and were awed ;
King of the world, the angels' God,
 And mine own new-born Boy.

JOSEPH.

Now, by the golden light of stars,
And the great crown each angel wears,
I see a throng of wayfarers.
 Coming across the moor

Are shepherd men, and men like kings ;
And every one his present brings ;
The sheep, the shepherds' shepherdings,
 And dog, are at our door.

[Kings and Shepherds enter and kneel.]

THE NATIVITY

MELCHIOR.

We are three kings from farthest Ind,
Travelled these many weeks to find
The greatest King of all mankind.
And since the Star hath shown

That this most precious Babe is He,
We worship Him on bended knee,
With silk and spice of Araby,
And gold to build His throne.

I, Melchior am, old beyond man,
Ages ago my reign began ;
Now to this Babe of scarce a span
I kneel, and kiss His feet.

Dear King, Thou sweet and tender One,
Linen I bring Thee finely spun,
And cloth of gold for Mary's Son,
To be His garb unmeet.

CASPAR.

Widowed of love, I frozen-eyed,
Since the black grave had snatched my bride,
Watching one night pavilions wide
Of stars in a dark field,

Saw one Star ruddier than a rose ;
And by my palace casement close
Heard a great voice : The way it goes
Follow : thy wounds are healed.

THE NATIVITY

Yea, we have followed patiently.
Thou gentle Babe, now take from me
Sendal and spice from oversea,
And frankincense and myrrh.

And I, too, kiss Thy tender feet,
Where the red blood doth pulse and beat,
Making a stain both dark and sweet,
As though a nail went there.

BALTHAZAR.

I young, with all the world before,
Glory, and love, and power in store,
Kneeling most humbly, I adore
The Babe in swaddling clothes.

The Star to me sang clear how was,
Here in the manger and the grass,
A King whose greatness did surpass
All that a mortal knows.

Sweet little Child, the gold I bring
Is an unworthy offering.
But would that for my kingliest King
A palace I might build,

With hall, and tower, and shining stair
All of the gold and ivory fair,
And million windows in the air
That the late sunsets gild.

THE NATIVITY

FIRST SHEPHERD.

Hail Thou, Whom the Star heralded,
Comely and tender in Thy bed !
Lady, I bring to His Godhead,
Being but a little Child,

A bunch of cherries, smooth and ripe,
Likewise a shepherd's oaten pipe.
He laughs, whilst thou the tears dost wipe,
To see my cherries wild.

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Hail, Sovereign Saviour, Who hast sought
Us, by Thy seeking brought to naught !
Wilt take a little bird I caught,
That hath a tuneful throat ?

Sweetest of sweetings, happy this
That thou shouldst greet it with a kiss,
And in Thy sweet hand make its bliss,
And chirrup to its note.

THIRD SHEPHERD.

Hail, dearest dear, full of Godhead,
Be with me in mine utmost need !
Alack, to see Thee in such weed,
Of pleasant things forlorn !

Behold I bring thee but a ball,
The which a child finds good withal.

THE NATIVITY

Hail, Holy King, asleep in stall,
Of Whom the world hath scorn !

MARY.

Kind gentlefolk, who came to seek
My little Son, new-born and weak ;
I thank you, since He cannot speak,
And lift His hand to bless,

At in-going and out-coming
And on your homeward wayfaring,
And wife and wean and everything
Ye hold in tenderness.

Be free from woe where'er ye go,
Kind gentlefolk, that honour so
The Babe that came in frost and snow.
He bids ye go in peace.

To kings and kindly shepherd men,
And dog, and sheep that turn again,
Of His sweet countenance full fain,
Be health and full increase.

THE ANGELS (*singing*).

*Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te,
Glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi
Propter magnam gloriam tuam.*

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

SCENE I.—JOSEPH *sleepeth in a room white with moonlight.*
Outside, Bethlehem lieth still in the moon. JOSEPH *dreameth*
and uttereth aloud his dream.

JOSEPH.

ARE they not safe? I heard, methought,
The crying of women sore distraught,
And through that lonely sound I caught
The shriek of babes, and then

Clashing of swords, and oaths, and fierce
Wild laughter rang against mine ears.
Mine eyes beheld the dripping spears
In hands of wicked men.

'Twas night in Bethlehem did seem
All through the horror of my dream.
And "Woe!" and "Woe to Bethlehem!"
I heard a voice cry on.

And yet I know the small town lies
Soothed by the sweetest lullabies,
Watched by a million starry eyes
That gaze until the dawn.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

I know the babies lie at rest,
Each rosy on its mother's breast,
Wherein love makes the tenderest nest.

O hard-heart little town,

That bade my dearest in her need
Take refuge in the cattle-shed,
And gave her sweetest Son for bed
The cattle's manger brown.

Nevertheless sleep well, and far
Away from thee those cries of war !
Sleep sweetly under the Birthnight Star
Until the cock shall crow.

The while I hear, as soft as love,
The tender breathing of my dove,
And the dear Babe her heart above
Breathing so soft and low.

*[A radiance floateth in his dream, in the midst
of which appeareth THE ANGEL OF THE
LORD.*

THE ANGEL.

Joseph, arise ! no time for sleep,
If thou thy trust with God wouldst keep.
Leave Bethlehem town to wail and weep,
But thou, up and away !

Take Mother and Child, and ride in haste
Across the desert still and vast.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Saddle thine ass and ride thee fast.
Be far ere break of day.

Herod now seeks the Child to kill.
Up and away with a good will.
Soon will the winds of dawn blow chill,
The day of blood be red.

Save thou the Child ! Here will be moan,
Weeping and lamentation lone,
The voice of Rachel for her son
Mourning uncomforted.

[JOSEPH *waketh and peereth in the moonlight.* *He*
 then ariseth hastily and wakeneth MARY.

JOSEPH.

Dearest, rise up and take the Child.
We must away ere yon star mild
Wanes in the day. While yet He smiled
In sleep, a vision rose,

And warned of danger dark and death.
Wrap thee right warm. The morning breath
Is cold, and cold the night bloweth
The way our journey goes.

MARY.

Alas, and is it so soon they seek
To slay my Babe new-born and weak ?
This little one so soft and meek,
No wild beast would Him harm.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Saddle the ass. We two will be
Ready by then to ride with thee.
My sweet shall take no chill with me :
My veil and cloak are warm.

Come, little one, now leave behind
The town where we no roof could find
The night that Thou wast born. Unkind
The desert need not prove

For Thee to whom the world is ill :
Yea, raveneth like a wild beast still,
My white and innocent lamb to kill,
Come, tender little dove !

[*They pass out into the darkness, where JOSEPH
holdeth the stirrup-rein of the ass.*]

SCENE II.—*In a robber's cave in the desert. MARY laveth
the little JESUS in clear water, while by her side LEAH, the
robber's wife, suckleth her babe.*

LEAH (*singeth*).
*Sleep sweet, my baby,
Whiter than snows,
Rose of the desert
That in the night blows.
Round my wan rosebud
Floweth my veil,
Screening my white rose,
Tender and pale.*

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

*Little white rosebud,
Be not in haste
Yet to uncover
To the hot blast.
World's breath will scorn thee,
Cruel winds blow,
Ravage my rosebud
Whiter than snow.*

*Lullaby, my rosebud,
Grow not a rose.
Round thee to shield thee
Mother's veil flows.
Rose of her darkness,
Make her heart glad—
The saddest poor mother
That ever earth had.*

MARY.

Why then, my sister, dost thou sing
So sad a cradle song to wing
Thy baby into slumbering?
Nay then, thine eyes be dried.

Kiss his soft feet and feel but this,
Thou art a mother, with that bliss
Turning all carking care that is
To happy joy and pride.

We take the joy and grief in one,
We mothers who have borne a son,

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

And would not wish our lot undone
If it were else all woes.

But hold my Jesus, and let me
Thy pretty baby on my knee
Nurse for a little. I would see
The face thou holdest so close.

LEAH (*weepeth*).

Lady, ah now you touch my wound.
Where is a sadder mother found
All the sad earth o'er and around?
O lady, see my child,

White with the leprosy! I dare
Not touch your boy's sweet face and hair,
Lest that my finger-tips should bear
Those seeds rank and defiled.

MARY.

Alas, poor mother, was this why
Didst lay thy precious baby by,
And wouldst not let my gaze come nigh
His piteous little form?

Nay, give him me, and take my sweet,
That is all sound from head to feet.
The evil thing I fear not it;
It cannot do Him harm.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Give me thy son. I will him bathe
Here where my one Son bathed hath.
Great virtue hath He evil scathe
And taint away to take.

[Holdeth the babe, swiftly unclothing him.]

Now in the water I thee lay.
My Baby's Father, take away
This baby's leprosy, I pray,
Even for Thy sweet Son's sake !
*[She raiseth the babe from the water, wholly cleansed,
and layeth him rosy in his mother's lap.]*

MARY.

Here is thy Dimas. Lift thine eyes !
See how he sweet and rosy lies
That piteous was and food for sighs.
Now, sister, praise the Lord !

LEAH (*falleth down*).

I praise His Name, and thee He sent,
His angel and His instrument,
To work on me His good intent,
And on my babe and bird.

MARY.

Praise me not. But if thou wilt, praise
My Baby through thy length of days,
And praise His Father who had grace
And pity for thy need.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Thou, little Dimas, who art clean,
I have a vision of thy sin,
And of thy sorrow that wins in
At last to Heaven indeed.

O little Dimas, round and smooth,
I see thee in thy lusty youth
Brought down to death and shame in truth ;
I see thee keeping tryst

In a most bitter day and hour
When men are mad and hell hath power,
High where the awful crosses tower,
Keeping thy tryst with Christ.

Little Dimas, when all is done,
Side by side with my little Son,
Thou winnest in when Heaven is won,
O happy little child !

Now sleep. And sleep, my Jesus small,
For little birds are sleeping all,
And shadows lengthen on the wall,
And fades the daylight mild.

A LOVER'S BREAST-KNOT

LOVE'S TROUBLE

FOR you I fear the stabbing rain,
The wounding wind ;
O wandering love, return again,
Turn, and be kind !
The distant thunder in the hills
I fear for you ;
I fear the lightning's spear that kills,
Wavering, blue.

For you the noonday sun I dread.
O noonday sun,
Rest quietly on his dear head,
My dearest one !
For you all evil beasts I fear,
All foul affrights,
With winged shadows that creep anear
In lonely nights.

Dear angels, guard him where he goes,
In day and dark !
Lest nigh his path, in lily and rose,
The serpent lurk.
O, sleepless eyes of blessed ones,
Watch o'er my love ;
And wings that shame th' eternal suns
Winnow above !

GREATER LOVE

THERE is but one sweet Love, one Love unroving,
Truer than mine may be ;
One constant Love beyond all mortal loving,
Greater than yours for me.

Therefore unto that Love I do commend you,
So that when mine shall fail
That love unfailing may wrap round, befriend you,
That sea of love prevail.

So that when my poor love is but remembered
As some sweet thing foregone,
That love may fill you full with sweets unnumbered,
And leave you not alone.

O Love eternal, Love supernal, keep him
If haply I should go ;
In all Love's raptures, Love's rewardings, steep him,
Yea, pay him all I owe !

LOVE'S BIRD

WHEN thrushes rest the weary head,
And linnets lie in gold and green,
When blackbirds on a downy bed
Are silvered with a moony sheen,

What voice awakes the emerald house?
What love incarnate flies on wings?
What passion shakes the trembling boughs?
It is the Bird of Love that sings?

It is the Bird of Love that sings,
Stabbing our silence like a sword ;
And Love himself that flies on wings,
God and enchanter and no bird.

Our moon of honey, our marriage moon
Rides in the heaven for our delight.
The silver world grows golden soon,
Honey and gold spilled in the night.

The Bird of Love, the Bird of Pain,
He sings our marriage moon away ;
Filling the night with golden rain,
Betwixt the darkness and the day.

LOVE'S BIRD

Closer and closer, hold me close:

For is it Love or Death he sings?

And is it Love or Death that goes

Through the sweet night with rustling wings?

LOVE'S WATCHFULNESS

WHEN you awake I wake,
And when you sleep I sleep.
Your lightest sigh will break
My sweetest dreams and deep.

My heart watches aware
Whether I wake or sleep.
Though far in dreams I fare,
Call, and my heart will leap.

The grave is not so low,
The way to Heaven so steep,
But I should surely know
If my love stirred in sleep.

What world, what starry sphere
My heart in dreams could keep,
If you wanted me, dear,
If you should wake and weep?

LOVE'S GARDEN

A LITTLE garden, great enough
To hold Love's wings.
Yea, and the sacred Bird of Love,
Hark, how he sings !

The ardent Flower of Love, likewise,
Burns in the brake.
Love's wings are set with myriad eyes,
Ever awake.

Heavy with honey flies the bee
From rose to rose ;
Powdered with gold dust to the knee,
He comes and goes.

The secret song the nightingale
Sang to the moon,
It shall be hidden by Love's veil,
Now it is noon.

The secret thing the golden bee
Said to the rose,
Though it be known to thee and me,
Shall we disclose ?

LOVE'S GARDEN

Ah no ! Love's secrets let us keep,
Lest the winged god,
Angered, go seeking, while we sleep,
Some new abode.

LOVE INCONSTANT

AFTER April months and May
Love of birds will fly away.
After June light loves grown chilly
Part, though tarry rose and lily.
O alas ! such loves should sunder,
They who made the world a wonder,
Raining from their honey throats
Golden notes and silver notes !

O in April what unrest
Stirs the swallow's sea-born breast ?
For some love of old and golden,
Where pale orchards bloom unfolden :
For some silent heartstring stirred,
Some lost heaven remembered.
And the old dream calls him home,
Home by trackless skies and foam.

O alas, such things should be !
Cold as stone are he and she.
Empty gapes the nest and wide
They two planned with such sweet pride :
The sweet nestlings flown as far
As the light-winged lost loves are.

LOVE INCONSTANT

Love, whose love endures, see then
How sweet Love is wronged again !

How these birds, from lark to sparrow,
Snap his bow and blunt his arrow !

LOVE IN ABSENCE

I

LOVE IMPATIENT

COME while the sweet Spring stays, O come !
Come ere the nightingale be dumb ;
While on her eggs his mate doth sit,
And all the chestnut lamps are lit.

Come ere the baby leaves grow old.
Crumpled and soft, these keep the fold
Of tight enswathèd buds, O come !
While yet the swallow is new to home.

Come while our orchard like a bride
Blushes through white, and evening-tide
Hangs all the pear-trees with such white,
Spun from the moon-rays for delight.

Come while the yellow moon still shows,
A moon of honey, a golden rose ;
And while all night in rapt content
Our garden of Eden spills its scent.

Come ere the cuckoo's song is over,
Come in the day of every lover,
When every lover still wings for home ;
Come ere the nightingale be dumb !

II

LOVE CONTENT

I WOULD not shorten if I might
By one sweet hour the hours that stand
Betwixt me and my heart's delight.

May and the lilac in the land,
All rapturous sounds, and scents at night,
The days spill out their golden sand.

Sweet is the garden, white with bloom,
Heavy with honey, drenched with scent,
Wherein a bride awaits her groom,

In a most measureless content.
With gold and white day fills the loom,
And soon the moon-gold nights are spent.

I would not shorten by an hour
The hours wherein I wait for you
With Love and all the world in flower.

So sweet, so sweet in sun and dew.
It is the hour of Love's full power,
Yet come, and make my world anew !

HOME-COMING

O PASSIONATE pilgrim, was the way
So long then, was the day so long
From the blue matin till 'twas gray?
From morning till the evening-song?

Was it so long, Love, while you came
Nearer each minute? lead-foot, slow,
Did the day round to evening-flame?
And was the daylight slow to go?

And did your eager eyes look far
To see the crescent moon rise bright?
And Hesper, your home-coming star,
Did Hesper tarry long that night?

At last the moon rained gold, and lest
The moon-gold were too cold, there fell
Drifting of bloom about your nest;
That night the nightingale sang well.

O sweet day full of scent and song,
Sweetly it wore from dawn to even;
And yet the sweet day did us wrong,
Since evening brought the lover's heaven.

THE LARK IN LOVE

THE lark that's climbing stair on stair
His ladder of light that swings in air
Hath a new note for every rung :
The lark's in love and young.

But soon the clouds allure no more,
No more the silver-damasked floor ;
In spirals was his outward track,
But headlong comes he back.

He falls, shot through the burning heart,
Yea, through the heart by Love's own dart ;
Too well the cunning archer knew
The arrow he sent was true.

But, lark, what wisdom dost thou prove
Whose wings, still tethered by thy love,
Carry thy song to Paradise :
Yet sweeter are her eyes.

That was her praise, thy song that poured,
And his of wedded lovers, the lord.
Io Hymen ! Thou happy boy,
Drunken with love and joy.

THE LARK IN LOVE

To Hymen! O, speckled breast,
Minstrel of thine own wedding-feast,
Lover and bridegroom, singing still
How Love shall have his will!

LOVE'S CAREFULNESS

UNTO myself I am grown dear,
 Being dear to you ;
And fearful with a double fear
 In all I do,
Lest that some evil chance should prove
Ruin of that poor thing you love.

O this woman will love her girl,
 And that her boy !
I keep not even the golden curl
 Of our dead joy ;
Now both my loves in one are given
Ever to you who make my heaven.

If all our palaces were dust
 Blown on the wind,
I might some other woman trust
 To be as kind,
To love as well as I—but then
What love could bid you love again ?

O generous giver, who hast given
 Once and for aye,
For life and death, for earth and heaven,
 As for to-day,
I love myself because you hold
Every hair of my head as gold.

CALLING THE BIRDS

Who close beside our window-pane
Whistles thrice at the dawn of day,
And listens, for his answer fain?

Toujours gai.

Who bids the merry din resound,
While oaten pipes are silvery gray,
Ere chanticler first turns him round?

Toujours gai.

Who bids the corncrake, shrill and blithe,
Wake up on his sweet couch of hay,
And whirr against the mower's scythe?

Toujours gai.

Who hales the finch from dreams of love,
And linnet to his roundelay,
And from Love's arms the wooing dove?

Toujours gai.

Who calls the robin and the starling,
And bids the blackbird's flute to play,
The thrush to sing: O darling, darling?

Toujours gai.

CALLING THE BIRDS

Who is it wakes the sparrows' wall,
And sets a-tremble every spray,
With flutter, and chatter, and trill, and call?
Toujours gai.

This whistling thing at sweet o' the year,
O is he bird, or boy, or fay?
Mayhap, some fairy chanticleer.
Toujours gai.

May he be fed on honey and kisses,
And where the undying roses stay
Wake the sweet world to newer blisses
Toujours gai.

AUGUST WEATHER

DEAD heat and windless air,
And silence over all ;
Never a leaf astir,
But the ripe apples fall ;
Plums are purple-red,
Pears amber and brown ;
Thud ! in the garden-bed
Ripe apples fall down.

Air like a cider-press
With the bruised apples' scent ;
Low whistles express
Some sleepy bird's content ;
Still world and windless sky,
A mist of heat o'er all ;
Peace like a lullaby,
And the ripe apples fall.

LOVE AT EASTER

Sing to the Lord a new song!

Because the Spring comes newly,
And every slender sapling
Has budded green and red.

Sing to the Lord a new song!

The skylark sings it truly,
Since all in dewy April
His love and he are wed.

Sing to the Lord a new song!

For every bird's a lover,
And o'er the purple furrows
The green spears nod and wave.

Sing to the Lord a new song!

Since Lenten fasts are over,
And Easter's gone in glory,
And Christ has left the grave.

Sing to the Lord a new song!

A song of love and wedding,
For every bird is building
His nest in bower and tree.

Sing to the Lord a new song!

The tufts of soft wool spreading
Where a brown wife and babies
This April-tide shall be.

OF THE TRUE MARRIAGE

UNTO His servant on a day
The Lord revealed His hidden way.

He said : "Within this city great,
Where sin still slays the Lamb of God,
What dost thou think I contemplate
For comfort when I look abroad?"
His servant answered: "Yonder church
Crowded at Mass-time to the porch."

The Lord replied: "Not so"; and then,
His servant guessed to make Him glad
The priest where he sat shriving men;
The wounded healed; the orphan clad;
The widow's tears wiped off; the poor
Fed from another's little store.

And then he guessed the saint who died
Last night; Fra Leo, vigil-pale,
Painting the wings of Heaven; Christ's bride
New-wed, beneath her shadowy veil;
The gray cross in the market-place
With children playing at its base.

OF THE TRUE MARRIAGE

And many things of earth and heaven :

 The Convent garden and the doves ;

The western sky aflame at even ;

 The mountains and the orange groves ;

The sea that moaned alway and prayed :

And yet the Lord God shook His head.

He said : " Lo, in thy city I see

 A wife and husband, full of love,

Whose lives in loving harmony

 Are set all death and change above.

I see : and leaning from my place,

I bless them in their hidden grace.

" Whose love and peace and sweet accord

Comfort Me greatly," saith the Lord.

LOVE COMFORTLESS

THE child is in the night and rain

On whom no tenderest wind might blow,
And out alone in a hurricane.

Ah, no,

The child is safe in Paradise !

The snow is on his gentle head,

His little feet are in the snow,
O, very cold is his small bed !

Ah, no,

Lift up your heart, lift up your eyes !

Over the fields and out of sight,

Beside the lonely river's flow,
Lieth the child this bitter night.

Ah, no,

The child sleeps under Mary's eyes !

What wandering lamb cries sore distressed,

Whilst I with fire and comfort go ?
O, let me warm him in my breast !

Ah, no,

'Tis warm in God's lit nurseries !

THE SHEEPFOLD

THE Shepherd of the sheepfold leant
Upon his crook, and saw within
The fold his milky ewes content,
His white lambs innocent of sin.

The milky mothers giving suck
He saw, and merry lambs at play ;
Yet, leaning on his shepherd's crook,
His eyes, his heart, were turned away.

His tender thoughts were turned apart
To where his orphaned lambs cried on ;
Their cries lay heavy on his heart—
Poor milkless lambkins and undone.

With tears he saw the milky dams
Go dropping milk upon the grass ;
These were the mothers of dead lambs,
The mothers of dead lambs, alas !

O little lambs that would not live,
Your milk runs all to bitter waste,
Your milk that makes the Shepherd grieve,
Runs out like tears so hot and fast.

THE SHEEPFOLD

O comfort, comfort then those sheep,
Whose little lovely lambs are dead.
The milk that makes the Shepherd weep
Runs out like tears, and none is fed.

HOLY INNOCENTS

GOLD on gold, snow on snow,
Height on height, row on row ;
Greater in number these
Than the sands of the seas.

Yea, past all counting far,
Flower on flower, star on star,
Dimpled shoulder, cheek of peach,
As they lean each to each.

Golden heads, brows of pearl,
O many a boy and girl,
O many a girl and boy,
Mother's grief, mother's joy.

But amid snow and gold,
Gathered warm from the cold,
Fairer than gold, more fine,
Should be two that are mine.

LOVE'S THANKSGIVING

O how good God is that He sends
Stores of unfailing love to me,
And work and prayer and praise of friends,
Blackbirds and thrushes in the tree,
And sheep-bells in the fields, and roses
And all the sweets of May and June,
And lavender and dew and posies,
And sun and moon.

O how good God is that He sends
Bean-rows in blossom, bees i' the hive,
Gray dawns and golden evening-ends,
And a glad heart to be alive ;
A grateful mind and quiet fancies,
Shade from the sun, and sleep at night,
And clumps of brown and golden pansies,
And lilies white.

O how good God is that He sends
A little child to be all ours,
Mine and my dearest Love's, and tends
Our blossom in the sun and showers,
And bids His angels still keep near him
Lest that the little feet should miss,
And wings of angels still to bear him
Ever in bliss.

LOVE'S THANKSGIVING

O how good God is that He keeps
The child for ever and ever well,
Above the tempests and the deeps,
In joy no tongue can tell.
Our little lamb of God goes straying,
By daisied meadows, 'neath dappled skies ;
Our little lamb of God goes playing
Under God's eyes.

THE CHILD IN HEAVEN

THE nursery windows were cold and black,
The nursery hearth it was gray and sad ;
She moaned for the child that would never come back,
Her heart was broken for her little lad.
She had folded his garments and put them away,
She had hidden his cradle quite out of sight :
But the child was glad in the light of day,
While she was caught in the bitter night.

*He thinks of his mother through all that cheer ;
He would never forget in a hundred year.*

The silence ached for the baby's cry.
O silence, silence and loneliness !
And the thought of the empty nursery
Cried at her heart with a keen distress—
Knocked at her heart like a ghost of the night,
Followed her ever or near or far :
But her little boy he is clad in white,
In the land that is over the morning star.

*He thinks of his mother through all that cheer ;
He would never forget in a hundred year.*

THE CHILD IN HEAVEN

His bed was soft as a nest of roses,
His robes were all of the linen spun,
He had taken naught but a handful of posies
When he went out on his way alone—
When he went out where she might not follow,
And left her stricken and cold and bare,
His radiant journey by hill and hollow,
To the dear God's House in the glittering air

*He thinks of his mother through all that cheer
He would never forget in a hundred year.*

She will come one day to God's nursery,
Where His little babies are safe and warm
And lift the little one to her knee,
And lose the ache of the empty arm,
And lose the ache of the empty heart,
And fashion newly Love's empty nest,
And kiss his brows and his lips apart,
And give him milk from her lonely breast.

*He thinks of his mother through all that cheer;
He would never forget in a hundred year.*

LOVE IN HEAVEN

THE child is rocked on Mary's knees,
Her lullaby stills his alarms,
Love's cradle gives him happy ease,
Love's nest of love within her arms :
"Lullaby," she singeth, "pretty babe of sorrow,
Thy mother comes to stay with thee to-morrow."

One angel holds his basin, one
His ewer of golden water sweet,
And one his robe to put him on,
And one his pillow and his sheet.
"O mystery," they cry, "of love and sorrow,
Sleep sweet, dear babe, thy mother comes to-morrow."

Immortal angels standing by,
Kiss that sweet babe on Mary's knee.
"Blessed the woman is," they sigh,
"Whose motherhood hath given her thee.
Happy her lot in mortal joy and sorrow
Who lost thee yesterday but finds to-morrow."

THE WIND IN THE TREES

ST. VALENTINE

THE West Wind blew so sweet and cold,
The country wind and dear,
From fields and woods and gardens old
In the morning of the year.
The pleasant sparrows, rooks, and daws
Drank up that wind like wine,
And hailed the day with loud applause
And chatterings gay and fine,
Because
It was St. Valentine.

The larks were fleeting near the earth,
And fluttering high and low ;
The blackbird joined his golden mirth
To Spring's triumphal show.
The thrush was gathering twigs and straws
All day in that sweet shine,
And feathers from the briars and haws
Some bed of love to line,
Because
It was St. Valentine.

PINK ALMOND

So delicate, so airy,
The almond on the tree,
Pink stars that some good fairy
Has made for you and me.

A little cloud of roses,
All in a world of gray,
The almond flower uncloses
Upon the wild March day.

A mist of roses blowing
The way of fog and sleet,
A dust of roses showing
For gray dust in the street.

Pink snow upon the branches,
Pink snowflakes falling down
In rosy avalanches
Upon the dreary town.

A rain, a shower of roses,
All in a roseless day ;
The almond-tree uncloses
Her roses on the gray.

CHESTNUT IN APRIL

THE chestnut is a candlestick
Of arching clusters, rosy and thick,
And branches branching wide and high
Toward the smiling sky.

Closed are the sweet-lip buds that hide
A flame of mother-o'-pearl inside.
Open, open, O rosy mouth !
The wind is from the south.

O wind, from Spring's own country blow,
Till all the candles lit arow,
And all the candles lit a-ring,
Make Christmas-trees for Spring.

The little candle-cups are made
Of silver, rosy pearl, and jade.
Each cup shall hold its light aloft,
Moon-pale in wood and croft.

Not finer in the sky above
The heavenly candlestick, whereof
The candles are the stars that keep
Light while the sun's asleep.

CHESTNUT IN APRIL

O chestnut, light your million lamps
In fairy camps, in dew and damps,
And draws the moths at eve to play
Around their glimmering ray.

O chestnut, light your lamps all pale,
The nights are for the nightingale.
Amid your lamps Love's bower is made :
Love's litanies are prayed.

Too soon, too soon on hill and lawn,
Like him who quenches lamps at dawn
Shall one blow out your lights and leave
The woods to dusky eve.

EASTER

BRING flowers to strew His way,
Yea, sing, make holiday ;
Bid young lambs leap,
And earth laugh after sleep.

For now He cometh forth
Winter flies to the north,
Folds wings and cries
Amid the bergs and ice.

Bring no sad palms like those
That led Him to His foes,
Bring wind-flower, daffodil,
From many a vernal hill.

Let there be naught but bloom
To light Him from the tomb
Who late hath slain
Death, and his glory ta'en.

Yea, Death, great Death is dead,
And Life reigns in his stead ;
Cometh the Athlete
New from dead Death's defeat.

EASTER

Cometh the Wrestler,
But Death he makes no stir,
Utterly spent and done,
And all his kingdom gone.

Bring flowers, make holiday,
In His triumphal way.
Salve ye with kisses
His hurts that make your blisses.

Bring flowers, make holiday,
For His triumphal way :
Yea, fling before Him
Hearts of men that adore Him.

LAMBS

HE sleeps as a lamb sleeps,
Beside his mother.
Somewhere in yon blue deeps
His tender brother
Sleeps like a lamb and leaps.

He feeds as a lamb might,
Beside his mother.
Somewhere in fields of light
A lamb, his brother,
Feeds, and is clothed in white.

LARKS

ALL day in exquisite air
The song clomb an invisible stair,
Flight on flight, story on story,
Into the dazzling glory.

There was no bird, only a singing,
Up in the glory, climbing and ringing,
Like a small golden cloud at even,
Trembling 'twixt earth and heaven.

I saw no staircase winding, winding,
Up in the dazzle, sapphire and blinding,
Yet round by round, in exquisite air,
The song went up the stair.



LEAVES

MYRIADS and myriads plumed their glistening wings,
As fine as any bird that soars and sings,
As bright as fireflies or the dragon-flies,
Or birds of paradise.

Myriads and myriads waved their sheeny fans,
Soft as the dove's breast, or the pelican's ;
And some were gold, and some were green, and some
Pink-lipped, like apple-bloom.

A low wind tossed the plumage all one way,
Rippled the gold feathers, and green and gray,—
A low wind that in moving sang one song
All day and all night long.

Sweet honey in the leafage, and cool dew,
A roof of stars, a tent of gold and blue ;
Silence and sound at once, and dim green light,
To turn the gold day night.

Some trees hung lanterns out, and some had stars,
Silver as Hesper, and rose-red as Mars ;
A low wind flung the lanterns low and high,—
A low wind like a sigh.

LEAVES

Myriads and myriads, more in number than
The sea's sands, or its drops of water wan.
Sang one Name in the rapture that is May,
With faces turned one way.

CHANTICLEER

OF all the birds from East to West
That tuneful are and dear,
I love that farmyard bird the best,
They call him Chanticleer.

*Gold plume and copper plume,
Comb of scarlet gay ;
'Tis he that scatters night and gloom,
And whistles back the day !*

He is the sun's brave herald
Who, ringing his blithe horn,
Calls round a world dew-pearled
The heavenly airs of morn.

O clear gold, shrill and bold,
He calls through creeping mist
The mountains from the night and cold
To rose and amethyst.

He sets the birds to singing,
And calls the flowers to rise ;
The morning cometh, bringing
Sweet sleep to heavy eyes.

CHANTICLEER

*Gold plume and silver plume,
Comb of coral gay ;
'Tis he packs off the night and gloom,
And summons home the day !*

Black fear he sends it flying,
Black care he drives afar ;
And creeping shadows sighing
Before the morning star.

('Tis O, and woe, the lone ghost
That glides before his call,
And huddles in its grave, so lost,
Below the churchyard wall !)

The birds of all the forest
Have dear and pleasant cheer,
But yet I hold the rarest
The farmyard Chanticleer.

*Red cock or black cock,
Gold cock or white,
The flower of all the feathered flock,
He whistles back the light !*

THE GARDENER

For the light heart or heavy heart
Medicine. Set thou a time apart,
And to thy garden thee betake
With hoe and spade and pot and rake.

Mark thou thy garden,—and not spare
Thyself as honest labourer.
Break thou the earth and turn withal,
So the live airs thereon shall fall.

Then set thy little seeds in rows,
With the kind earth for swaddling clothes ;
And these shall presently awake,
And into life and praise shall break.

Hoe, thin, and water then, that these
May spread their growing limbs at ease ;
And prune the vaulting boughs lest they
Should dwindle for the warmth of day.

Soon shall the sweet Spring trumpets ring,
And all the world sing songs for Spring ;
Then from the wormy bed shall rise
Creatures that wear the peacock's eyes.

THE GARDENER

No man shall childless go who hath
Raised these sweet babies out of death.
O peachy cheeks and goldilocks,
And maids in rose and scarlet frocks !

Here shall resort the butterfly,
The birds set up their loves hereby.
The mealy-mouthed bee shall come
For honey for his queen at home.

Brown shall the man grow, being wooed
With the sun's kisses, brave and good,
Shall be an-hungered, and, being fed,
Shall find his bed a golden bed.

Squirrels and hares and gamesome things,
And all sweet folk that go on wings,
Shall sit with him when he shall eat,
And ask a blessing on his meat.

The wonders of the skies for him
Shall open, nor his eyes be dim ;
And seeing the first leaf unfold,
He shall praise God an hundredfold.

Yea, he shall learn from his employ
How God turns mourning into joy,
And from earth's graves calls up at last
His flowers when all the Winter's past.

SING, CUCKOO

Cuckoo calls in the heavenly weather,

Cuckoo !

I, my Love, and the Spring together.

Soft are dreams of clear waters falling,

Cuckoo !

Softer yet is the Cuckoo calling.

Veils of distance cover and hide him,

Cuckoo !

Cuckoo comes and the Spring beside him.

Cuckoo utters the one call only,

Cuckoo !

Lacking Cuckoo the Spring were lonely.

THE LITTLE RED LARK

THE little red lark is shaking his wings,
Straight from the breast of his love he springs ;
Listen the lilt of the song he sings,
All in the morning early, O.

The sea is rocking a cradle, hark !
To a hushing-song, and the fields are dark.
And would I were there with the little red lark,
All in the morning early, O.

The beard of barley is old-man's-gray,
All green and silver the new-mown hay.
The dew from his wings he has shaken away,
All in the morning early, O.

The little red lark is high in the sky.
No eagle soars where the lark may fly.
Where are you going to, high, so high ?
All in the morning early, O.

His wings and feathers are sunrise red ;
He hails the sun and his golden head :
Good-morrow, sun, you are long abed,
All in the morning early, O.

THE LITTLE RED LARK

I would I were where the little red lark,
Up in the dawn like a rose-red spark,
Sheds the day on the fields so dark,
All in the morning early, O.

SPRING LONGING

OFTEN I wish that I might be,
This gay and golden weather,
Among my father's fields, ah, me !
And he and I together.

Below the mountains, fair and dim,
My father's fields are spreading.
I'd rather tread the sward with him
Than I would dance at a wedding.

O green and fresh your English sod
With daisies sprinkled over ;
But greener far were the fields I trod,
And the honeyed Irish clover.

O, well your skylark cleaves the blue
To bid the sun good-morrow ;
He has not the bonny song I knew
High over an Irish furrow.

And often, often, I'm longing still,
This gay and golden weather,
For my father's face by an Irish hill,
And he and I together.

FAREWELL

NOT soon shall I forget—a sheet
Of golden water, cold and sweet,
The young moon with her head in veils
Of silver, and the nightingales.

A wain of hay came up the lane—
O fields I shall not walk again,
And trees I shall not see, so still
Against a sky of daffodil !

Fields where my happy heart had rest,
And where my heart was heaviest,
I shall remember them at peace
Drenched in moon-silver like a fleece.

The golden water sweet and cold,
The moon of silver and of gold,
The dew upon the gray grass-spears
I shall remember them with tears.

CUCKOO

HIS voice runs before me ; I follow, it flies :
It is now in the meadow, and now in the skies ;
So blithesome, so lightsome, now distant, now here,
And when he calls Cuckoo, the summer is near.

He calls back the roses, red roses that went
At the first blast of winter, so sad and forspent,
With the dew in their bosoms, young roses and dear,
And when he calls Cuckoo, the summer is near.

I would twine him a gold cage, but what would he do
For his world of the emerald, his bath in the blue,
And his wee feathered comrades to make him good cheer?
And when he calls Cuckoo, the summer is near.

Now, blackbird, give over your harping of gold !
Brown thrush and green linnet, your music withhold !
The flutes of the forest are silver and clear,
But when he calls Cuckoo, the summer is here.

OF AN ORCHARD

Good is an Orchard, the Saint saith,
To meditate on life and death,
With a cool well, a hive of bees,
A hermit's grot below the trees.

Good is an Orchard : very good,
Though one should wear no monkish hood.
Right good, when Spring awakes her flute,
And good in yellowing time of fruit.

Very good in the grass to lie,
And see the network 'gainst the sky,
A living lace of blue and green,
And boughs that let the gold between.

The bees are types of souls that dwell
With honey in a quiet cell ;
The ripe fruit figures goldenly
The soul's perfection in God's eye.

Prayer and praise in a country home,
Honey and fruit : a man might come,
Fed on such meats, to walk abroad,
And in his Orchard talk with God.

THE COMPLAINT

THE first sound that I hear at morn
In the low house where I was born
Is plaint of the wood-dove forlorn,
Leaning her breast upon a thorn.

All day in orchard coppices
The low moan of the wood-dove is.
Song-birds all singing give less bliss
Than she who mourns Love's little ease.

Crickets in sunny grass a-whir,
And many a bronze-winged trumpeter,
All the blithe country shine and stir,
And from all these I turn to her.

All noon, in the gold shade and sun,
Love's litany she doth intone,
Joining two lovers' names in one,
That shall not join till time be done.

All the gold afternoon again
She makes sweet music of her pain—
Love's captive, that yet hugs her chain
And of Love's whip and scourge is fain.

THE COMPLAINT

At night, when all the linnets keep
Silence, and bats and owlets creep,
Ere ever I fall to honeyed sleep,
I hear the wood-dove weep and weep.

DROUGHT

THE sky is grayer than doves,
Hardly a zephyr moves,
Little voices complain ;
The leaves rustle before the rain.

No thrush is singing now,
All is still in the heart o' the bough ;
Only the trembling cry
Of young leaves murmuring thirstily.

Only the moan and stir
Of little hands in the boughs I hear,
Beckoning the rain to come
Out of the evening, out of the gloom.

The wind's wings are still ;
Nothing stirs but the singing rill
And hearts that complain.
The leaves rustle before the rain.

THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY

THERE'S music in my heart all day,
I hear it late and early,
It comes from fields are far away,
The wind that shakes the barley.
Ochone !

Above the uplands drenched with dew
The sky hangs soft and pearly ;
An emerald world is listening to
The wind that shakes the barley.
Ochone !

Above the bluest mountain-crest
The lark is singing rarely.
It rocks the singer into rest,
The wind that shakes the barley.
Ochone !

O, still through summers and through springs
It calls me late and early.
Come home, come home, come home, it sings,
The wind that shakes the barley.
Ochone !

THE GREEN FIELDS TO AMERICA

THE green fields to America make my heart sore,
The green fields to America that I have travelled o'er ;
Oh, many and many a mile they stretch so wide and free,
The green fields to America betwixt my love and me !

There's a pretty bird, a birdeen gray, he swings on high,
Nor fears at all the pathless main, the trackless sky ;
Oh, if I had that birdeen's wings, 'tis I would take
The green fields from America, for my love's sake.

Oh, what to me were wastes of storm and miles of sea ?
The compass in my heart points straight to my countree ;
To where my love sits quietly beside the sands
Of the green fields to America with his head in his hands.

The little fields we once did roam were gold and green,
And here are but the washing waves and white foam between ;
Above the little fields at home the hills are blue :
God bless the kindly fields at home, the fond love I knew.

May God and Mary strengthen me to take that way,
The green fields from America some lucky day ;
And God and Mary bring me safe, to stray no more
From the little fields I knew of old and kind love of yore !

MUSHROOMS

THESE be the mushroom days, and lo !
The mushroom rings so darkly grow,
Round as a wedding-ring, and set
With pearls like any carcanet.

Who made the rings so fine and round
Twined in and out by hollow and mound ?
And who hath summoned mushrooms hither,
Here where the fairies dance together ?

Here are the tracks of feet that went
Before the day, in dew and scent,
Before the dew was dried, and trod
The mushroom-strewn and emerald sod.

Who were the early risers, who
That in the gray dusk and the dew
Brushed with their cloaks the gossamer,
And set the shivering grass astir ?

The owl his counsel well doth keep ;
The wood-dove she was fast asleep ;
The lark was up too late to see
The mushrooms gather on hill and lea.

MUSHROOMS

The earth-bound corncake, she might know,
But that she went a month ago
To Egypt, where she lieth hid
Sand-deep beside a pyramid,

Nursing her honey-voice. Well then
The mystery, mystery must remain ;
Since eyes of birds nor human eyes
No fairy secret shall surprise ;

Of who in dew and dawn did fashion
The fairy rings in sweet rotation,
And set the mushrooms in the ring,
And who came hither mushrooming.

POPLAR

THE blinding sky's unkind,
The day has dust and glare,
The poplar keeps the wind
In her cage of light and air,
Makes of her leaves a snare
To keep the wind confined ;
All in the breathless glare
The poplar holds the wind.

O cool and beautiful
Her leaves of silver-gray
Hang in the wind so cool
In the blind and breathless day,
Turn in the wind at play,
Fresh as a little pool
That in the forest gray
Holds silver fins and cool.

All other trees are still,
The oak, the elm, and the beech,
But the poplar hath her fill
Of soft and gracious speech.
The winds are out of reach
Beyond the sea and the hill
For the oak, and elm, and beech,
But the poplar hath her fill.

THE GRAY MORNINGS

THE gray mornings I well remember,
The gray mountains new-waked from slumber,
The gray dews on the trees and hedges,
And in gray distance the gray sea's edges.

Cool it was, sweet beyond telling,
The gray-green hay in the pastures smelling,
The gray meadows wet as a river,
The gray dew where the grass-blades quiver.

Gray gulls and the sea-gray swallow
Take the track that my heart would follow.
Home from the heat and the cruel weather,
That I and my heart might fare together !

Purple-gray are the wild hills showing,
Silver-gray is the west wind blowing.
O gray fields and gray hills behind you,
Would my feet might follow and find you !

APPLES

ALL day in a green bower I sit,
Ripe apples drop about my feet,
Ripe apples drop about my head,
And in my very lap are shed.

Hither is blown no city chime,
The falling apples mark the time,
For every minute one falls down.
Thud!—there's another minute flown.

The rosy, smiling, sunburnt faces,
They have their bed in the sweet grasses,
Like children's heads that sisterly
Upon the same soft pillow lie.

Here are Heartsease and Honesty,
And Honeysuckle for the bee,
And Love-in-Idleness to stand
And keep the gates on either hand.

The air is rich with apple-scent ;
Yet since no mortal lot's content,
The apple-loving wasp is given
To trouble my terrestrial heaven.

THE FOGGY DEW

A SLENDID place is London, with golden store
For them that have the heart and hope and youth galore ;
But mournful are its streets to me, I tell you true,
For I'm longing sore for Ireland in the foggy dew.

The sun he shines all day here, so fierce and fine,
With never a wisp of mist at all to dim his shine ;
The sun he shines all day here from skies of blue,
He hides his face in Ireland in the foggy dew.

The maids go out to milking in the pastures gray,
The sky is green and golden at dawn of the day ;
And in the deep-drenched meadows the hay lies new,
And the corn is turning yellow in the foggy dew.

Mavrone ! if I might feel now the dew on my face,
And the wind from the mountains in that remembered place,
I'd give the wealth of London, if mine it were to do,
And I'd travel home to Ireland and the foggy dew.

THE RED DEER

AT KILLARNEY

THERE are lords of the forest,
And lords of the glen,
And lords of the waters,
And lords over men.
The birds of the blue air,
The fish of the mere,
All, all have their masters
Except the red deer.

From the heights of the mountain
Where no man shall tread,
Where in furze and in bracken
The deer hath his bed,
He will swim the fair waters,
From heaven to heaven ;
He is this man's at morning,
And that man's at even.

No ! free as the west wind
That comes from the ocean
And tosses the bright woods
And waves to commotion—

THE RED DEER

No ! free as the stars are,
The sun 's not more free :
He is free as the waters
Escaped to the sea.

All ye who would claim him,
Be silent at last !
Ye are gone like the bright leaves
Blown high on the blast.
With your castles and abbeys,
Through time he remaineth
The red deer of freedom
Whom no man enchaineth.

AN ANTHEM IN HEAT

Now praise the Lord, both moon and sun,
And praise Him all ye nights and days,
And golden harvests every one,
And all ye hidden waterways,
With cattle standing to the knees
Safe from the bitter gadfly's sting ;
But praise Him most, O little breeze
That walks abroad at evening.

O praise Him, all ye orchards now,
And all ye gardens deep in green,
Ripe apples on the yellowing bough,
And golden plum and nectarine,
And peaches ruddier than the rose,
And pears against the southern wall ;
But most the little wind that blows
The blessed wind at evenfall.

O praise Him, hoary dews again,
Drenching the meadows 'neath the moon,
And praise Him, hidden founts of rain,
And amber brooks singing a tune,
And icy deeps of well-water,
And each pellucid stream and spring ;

AN ANTHEM IN HEAT

But praise Him most, O wind astir,
O blessed wind at evening

O praise Him now, ye burning days
Of golden summer, hot and spent ;
Planets and stars, see that His praise
Be blown about the firmament.
Yet praise Him best, O little wind
That out of heaven will blow and call,
Because, because our God is kind
And bids us live at evenfall.

SPARROW

WHEN August hangs the bough with plums,
The dusty city sparrow comes
For sojourn in the country sweet,
To taste the barley and the wheat.

Like any country bird he walks
Down the gold aisles of bearded stalks,
Pecks juicy grains in ear, and takes
His pleasure in the barley-brakes.

He bathes in dew at morn, and preens
His sooty coat to mock the sheens
Of swallow, fieldfare, finch and wren
That hate the dusty ways of men.

His cynic wit, his mocking eye,
The innocent country ways decry ;
Though dews may wash his feathers clean
He keeps the urchin's heart within.

The gossip his of chimney-stacks ;
Wherefore the pleasant country lacks
Something, his ear the silence tires
Who nests amid the city spires.

SPARROW

To the perpetual green and gold
In dusk and dew his eyes are cold ;
For his untravelled heart yet turns
Home where the smoky city burns.

A little while for health he stays
Where Flora paints the country ways,
But holds that still the town is best
For men and birds of wit and taste.

OF THE APPLE

THE apples in the garden bed
Turned ripe and rosy to the South ;
The youngest novice shook her head,
And eyed them with a watering mouth.

She said : " Our Mother Eve wrought woe
Once with the deadly apple's bite :
God keeps mine eyes from following so
After my evil appetite."

Down came the saint, and gathered then
Of all the ripest, sweetest one,
Clear amber-cheeked, with ruddy stain,
From the hot kisses of the sun.

She ate, and praised God as she ate,
That He made apples very good.
" He might," she said, " have given the date,
The fig, the orange, for our food ;

" Nor yet made apples, to delight
The eye, the smell, the palate fine :
For these my grateful appetite
Praises the Giver kind, divine.

OF THE APPLE

“Sister,” she said, “come, pluck and eat,
And thank with me the Lord, Who made
For us such flavours, cool and sweet,
Wherewith the world abounds,” she said.

MANY WATERS

THERE were live waters racing down ;
The air was full of exquisite sound ;
Rainbows of spray wove them a crown,
For pools wherein the sun lay drowned.

Streams from the heights of Mangerton,
And from the crest of Torc, sweet streams,
Golden and brown, came singing on :
I hear the music in my dreams.

Drip, drip, from every rock there fell
A fringe of golden water fine,
Sweet as dew in the lily-bell,
Golden as honey, clear as wine.

The streams ran in the roads, the streams
Danced through the bracken and the fern,
Played hide-and-seek till there were gleams
Of gold water at every turn.

The mountains they were still in the sky,
The red deer never stirred in the woods,
The eagle kept his eyrie high :
These were the loveliest solitudes.

MANY WATERS

The roar of the Torc Waterfall
Was dreamy, all the lakes lay still ;
There was no bird singing at all :
My heart of music had her fill.

THE TREE'S DOUBLE

How beautiful the tree shadows lie on
The paler green o' the grasses !
October wind stirs them a little and passes,
Cloud-shadows sail above them and are gone.

The trees are like a golden fountain's spray,
Like golden waters raining.
When the October skies and ways are waning,
The trees alone have the heart to be gay.

Yet there's a blue sky, and the sun is gold,
A gold tree and a bird in it,
A Jenny Wren or a belated linnet,
Singing away though all the nests are cold.

The tree upon the grass has a bird's shadow,
As the live tree its bird,
Shadow and substance joyfully praise the Lord
As well as when the world was all a meadow.

And when the living tree rocks at its pleasure
Its bird in frolic glee,
The shadow bird within the shadow-tree
Dances upon the grass to the same measure.

MODEREEN RUE ¹

OCH, Modereen Rue, you little red rover,
By the glint of the moon you stole out of your cover,
And now there is never an egg to be got,
Nor a handsome fat chicken to put in the pot.

Och, Modereen Rue !

With your nose to the earth and your ear on the listen,
You slunk through the stubble with frost-drops a-glisten,
With my lovely fat drake in your teeth as you went,
That your red roguish children should breakfast content.

Och, Modereen Rue !

Och, Modereen Rue, hear the horn for a warning,
They are looking for red roguish foxes this morning ;
But let them come my way, you little red rogue,
'Tis I will betray you to huntsman and dog.

Och, Modereen Rue !

The little red rogue, he's the colour of bracken,
O'er mountains, o'er valleys, his pace will not slacken.
Tantara ! tantara ! he is off now, and, faith !
'Tis a race 'twixt the little red rogue and his death.

Och, Modereen Rue !

¹ *I.e.*, the little red rogue—the fox.

MODEREEN RUE

Och, Modereen Rue, I've no cause to be grieving
For little red rogues, with their tricks and their thieving.
The hounds they give tongue, and the quarry's in sight,
The hens on the roost may sleep easy to-night.

Och, Modereen Rue !

But my blessing be on him ! He made the hounds follow
Through the woods, through the dales, over hill, over hollow,
It was Modereen Rue led them fast, led them far,
From the glint of the morning till eve's silver star.

Och, Modereen Rue !

And he saved his red brush for his own future wearing,
He slipped into a drain, and he left the hounds swearing.
Good luck, my fine fellow, and long may you show
Such a clean pair of heels to the hounds as they go.

Och, Modereen Rue !



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